



City of South Milwaukee BUCYRUS FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT Application Process & Grant Guide

The City of South Milwaukee Plan Commission and Economic Development Team administers the Bucyrus Façade Improvement Program. Funding for this program is provided through the Bucyrus Foundation. Grants are awarded on a continual basis and are subject to annual funding.

Program Goals

- Enhance the attractiveness of the City's Downtown and Commercial Districts.
- Assist property owners in attracting retail businesses to vacant locations.
- Promote a high level of maintenance for sustainable Commercial Districts.
- Promote commercial vitality and increased economic activity in the Commercial Districts.
- Maintain or improve existing commercial property values within the Commercial Districts which may also effectuate an increase in property values of the surrounding areas.

Who is Eligible

Owners and tenants of existing commercial buildings located in the Downtown District, along North Chicago Avenue and South Chicago Avenue and commercial properties zoned C-1, C-2 or C-3 are eligible to apply.

The Downtown District is identified as a Tier 1 Target area and includes properties located in the 800 – 1300 blocks along Milwaukee Ave and 1800 – 2300 blocks along 10th Avenue. Tier 2 Target Areas are the remaining storefront commercial properties in the C-1, C-2 and C-3 zoning districts and along the North and South Chicago Avenue corridors.

Projects should contribute noticeable enhancements to the façade, beyond general and routine maintenance and comply with the City of South Milwaukee Commercial Façade Design Guidelines. Properties that are used in whole or part for service or commercial activities are eligible for funding.

Buildings must have an active ground floor area and be accessible to the primary street. Storefronts may not be vacant except for new businesses that have a signed lease.

Funding Details

Grant applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

\$15,000 maximum grant in the Tier 1 Target Area per storefront.

\$7,500 maximum grant in the Tier 2 Target Area per storefront.

\$1,000 minimum grant

50% matching grant for projects above \$5,000

25% matching grant from applicant for projects under \$5,000

\$2,500 maximum grant for parklets, decks and patio vertical elements, as part of the entire approved grant amount

\$2,000 maximum grant for developing a conceptual design with a 10% match from applicant, in addition to maximum façade grant

This grant will share in the actual cost of implementing the improvements identified in the conceptual design and in the cost estimate, including the cost to complete a final design and construction documents.

Limitations apply to properties that have received previous façade grants. Check with the City to confirm eligibility.

Process

1) Preliminary Review. The City Economic Development Project Manager reviews a projects general eligibility before an application is submitted. Applications are provided following preliminary review.

2) Guidelines. Review the South Milwaukee Commercial Façade Design Guidelines located on the website.

Qualified Improvements include:

- Repair and/or replacement of the original building's materials and decorative details which are deteriorated or missing
- Repair of non-original materials which cannot be removed due to deterioration of the underlying original building material
- Cleaning of exterior building surfaces
- Tuck pointing and masonry repair
- Painting
- Repair, replacement or addition of entrances, doors, display windows, transoms and upper story windows
- New signs. Removal, repair and/or replacement of existing signs. Restrictions apply. Grants for signs alone are not eligible IF there are other façade improvements deemed necessary
- New parklets and patio/deck vertical elements that are affixed to a building as permitted by code, subject to maximum reimbursement
- Design fees, subject to maximum reimbursement
- Permanent exterior lighting
- Artistic applications, such as murals or three-dimensional beautification elements

Disqualifying Activities:

- Work on non-mixed use, residential buildings
- Work on national franchises, churches and other religious institutions
- Work on a commercial building facade not facing a public street
- Work on a roof and/or flooring
- Work done before execution of a Façade Improvement Program Agreement
- Work done in response to code compliance orders
- Purchase of property
- Construction of a new building
- Patios, decks or balconies not facing a public street
- Fixtures and equipment
- Inventory
- Non-permanent landscaping
- Existing liens on property (except mortgage), judgments, or encumbrances



3) Architect. Although it is not required, it is recommended that you consult with an architect or design professional for any major façade renovation. Architectural plans, elevations and/or perspective drawings illustrating the alterations must be submitted with your completed applications.

4) Submit Complete Applications. Complete the Façade Improvement Grant and Plan Commission Applications. Include a Conceptual Design Phase application if professional designs are done.

- a. Provide at least two bids for the project from qualified contractors. The applicant is not required to accept the lowest bid. If there is a difference in total pricing of 20% between the two bids and the applicant wishes to go with the more expensive bid, the Owner/Applicant is responsible for explaining in writing why there is a pricing difference and why the higher bid is being chosen.
- b. For murals, supply three references and time and materials estimate in lieu of contractor bids
- c. Provide photos of existing conditions

5) Building Inspector Review. Once all materials are submitted and review completed by the economic development staff, a review with the building inspector may be required.

6) Agreement. The Owner/Applicant and Staff will execute a Façade Improvement Program Agreement in which the Owner/Applicant agrees to complete the project in a timely manner within one year. The Agreement is approved by the Plan Commission.

7) Plan Commission. The Plan Commission approves applications and agreements. They meet the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

- a. Work must start within 90 days of execution of the Façade Improvement Program Agreement. Exceptions may be approved by the Plan Commission, not to exceed 180 days
- b. Any changes to the approved plan will require a written request from the applicant and approval by the Plan Commission

8) Reimbursement. The City agrees to reimburse the Owner/Applicant upon completion of the project.

- a. All invoices, proof of payment and lien waivers for the project work must be reviewed and approved by Staff before grant reimbursement occurs.
- b. All permits have been finalized

Reporting Requirements

Completion of a survey is required after six months and one year following grant reimbursement, with exemptions for smaller-scaled projects.

This document is meant as a guide and further eligibility criteria may apply, identified through the preliminary approval process.

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