

The City of Oakland

Presents the

San Pablo Avenue Golden Gate District Façade Improvement Program



Before



After

The City of Oakland and the Oakland Redevelopment Agency are pleased to offer the San Pablo Avenue Golden Gate District Façade Improvement Program for properties and businesses located within the Golden Gate District of Oakland.

The program now offers 2-to-1 matching grants which cover 2/3 of the renovation cost for up to a total grant award of \$60,000. In addition, if you need advice on how to improve your building façade, the City will also provide you with a limited amount of design assistance. The commercial zone within the Golden Gate District that is eligible for façade improvement grants includes San Pablo Avenue from 53rd to 67th Streets.

Now that new retailers and investors are showing an interest in the Golden Gate District, it is a prime time for you to improve the look of your storefront and/or building. Improving your storefront or building will create an architectural environment that will attract new business and increase the value of your property. Similar programs throughout Oakland have helped commercial districts improve their image and increase sales.

This manual provides an overview of the Façade Improvement Program. It describes the assistance available to you as you plan and complete improvements to the exterior of your business or property, and details which types of improvements and activities are eligible for reimbursement under the Program. The manual takes you step-by-step through the Program procedures and explains what you need to do in order to participate. Read on to find out more.

Program Manual

Who qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program?

You may be eligible for a matching grant if your business or property is located in the façade target area along San Pablo Avenue between 53rd and 67th Streets and falls into one of the following commercial land use categories: retail, office, industrial, civic/community assembly, mixed-use, or multi-family residential. You must be willing to pay for at least 1/3 of the cost of your façade improvement, which may include the following:

- Exterior paint
- New business signage
- New awnings or canopies
- Window repair & renovation
- Landscaping and exterior lighting
- Historic façade rehabilitation
- New doors & storefront systems
- Safety grille removal & improvement

Construction costs related to the above improvements and the associated permit fees are also eligible expenses for matching grants through the Program.

Grants will be awarded to projects based on their fulfillment of the following goals:

- Visual impact on the commercial district
- Clustering of projects for maximum impact
- Commitment of applicants to complete project
- Contribution of project to the economic vitality of the commercial district
- Enhancement of property appearance and historical features

Program Requirements

The following requirements must be met in order to participate in the Façade Improvement Program:

1. Applicants must ensure that all required permits will be obtained for all facade improvements as a part of the Façade Improvement Program.
2. The program participant will be required to meet Property Maintenance Standards as part of the Program agreement with the City. This Agreement will require applicants to maintain at their expense the improvements completed through the Program for five years.
3. All contractors hired by program participants must be licensed contractors that meet minimum insurance requirements set forth by the Program.
4. Program Applicants can be either property owners or tenants of commercial structures. However, property owners and affected tenants must **both** sign the Grant Application and Agreement in order to participate in the program.

5. If the program applicant is a business owner and not the property owner, the applicant must have a lease with a minimum of three years remaining from the date of application as well as the signed agreement of the property owner.

Design Services

The façade program currently works with a select group of architectural firms and you will be assigned one that is best suited for your project's needs. The selected architect and a City staff member will work directly with property and business owners to create design improvements compatible with the area and within the project budget. The architectural firm may also assist with monitoring the bidding and construction process. The architect will not be completing construction documents as part of the Façade Improvement Program. Fees for design services will be determined by the size of the project; however, the City will pay no more than \$5,000 per project for design services. The applicant will cover all additional fees beyond this amount.

Grant Funding

Façade grants are based on linear foot measurements of the building façade. The San Pablo Golden Gate Program will pay applicants up to 2/3 of the costs (2-to-1 match) for eligible façade improvements, up to a maximum of \$20,000 for buildings measuring 25 linear feet or less. Building facades exceeding 25 linear feet are eligible for additional grant funding in increments of \$5,000 per additional 10 linear feet. Matching grants will be distributed in the form of a *reimbursement*, once construction is complete and the terms stated in the Reimbursement Agreement have been met. If the terms and conditions are not met, the rebate will not be issued. In most situations, the grants will be issued in the form of checks payable directly to the property or business owner.

PROGRAM PROCEDURE

The standard procedure for the Façade Improvement Program is as follows:

APPLICATION PHASE

1. Applicants interested in the Program complete the **Program Application** and return it to the designated City staff member. The application must be signed by all of the owners of the businesses involved and all owners of the property.
2. The City staff member will screen the application and determine whether all information is provided and is accurate. City staff will check records to determine whether the property is eligible for the program.

DESIGN PHASE

3. City staff will meet with the applicant and an architect at the site to discuss the façade improvements desired and probable costs.

4. The architectural firm will complete a design proposal for the façade of the building. The scaled drawings will include the existing and proposed elevations. They will typically include measurements of significant features of the existing and proposed elevations, construction details, specifications for materials and hardware, specific colors and finishes. The drawings do not constitute construction documents, but in some cases may be sufficient to obtain permits. Additional information may be required to obtain building and any other required permits, which is the responsibility of the applicant.
5. City staff will arrange a second meeting with the applicant and the project architect to review the drawings of the suggested improvements and eventually finalize and agree upon the scope of the façade improvements. One or more alternative designs may be presented at this time, depending on staff recommendation and the type of project. Following this meeting, a finalized design will need to be agreed upon between the applicant and the City staff member and the applicant will make a formal commitment to provide his/her part of the matching funds for the project.

BIDDING PHASE

6. Using the design plan and scope of work prepared by the project architect, the applicant gets estimates from licensed contractors. Documented bids from three contractors are required for all work over \$200. Different parts of the project, such as signage, awnings or paint, can be separated for bidding and contracting, provided the applicant is committed to coordinating the contractor's work. In order to perform work, contractors will be required to meet requirements listed on the Program's Contractor's Requirements sheet of the Reimbursement Agreement (see below).
7. The architect and City staff will review the bids received for the compliance with the design documents, and to ensure that no improper substitutions are made. If bids are over budget, the architect will suggest areas to reduce costs.

GRANT AND AGREEMENT PHASE

8. Once a finalized design has been **agreed upon** between the City staff member and the applicant, the **Grant Reimbursement Agreement** can be filled out. This will include among other things, finalized design plans along with the bids for the work.
9. The **Reimbursement Agreement** must be *filled out, approved* and *returned* to the City staff person **BEFORE** construction can begin. The agreement consists of four parts. **1.) The Agreement for Reimbursement of Exterior Renovation Costs** outlines the financial agreement between the City and applicant. **2.) The Scope of Work** details the specific improvements and their costs. **3.) The Contractors Requirements** form is for each of your contractors to fill out. **4.) The Maintenance Standards** states that you are to maintain your improvements for five years.

10. If the project is in a location that requires **design review** (determined by zoning), the project will need to conform to appropriate standards. The owner or contractor will submit the plans for design review.

CONSTRUCTION & PROJECT COMPLETION

11. The applicant will hire the contractor(s) and coordinate construction activities with the contractor. City staff will not coordinate contractors' work. The applicant will have **60 days** to authorize the contractor to begin construction from the date City staff signs the Reimbursement Agreement. If the applicant has not authorized the contractor to begin construction within 60 days, the City of Oakland has the right to terminate the contract and utilize the reserved grant funds for other applicants who are ready to proceed.
12. Applicants of the program must adhere to the City's zoning and building codes. Applicants and their contractors must obtain all appropriate building, sign, electrical, plumbing, encroachment and other permits required by City prior to construction. Applicants will be responsible for permit fees (other than Design Review). The permit fees for such permits are eligible expenses for reimbursement under the Façade Improvement Program.
13. Contractor change orders will not be made without the prior approval of City staff and the architect. Applicants are responsible for any approved change orders that may affect the approved bid price.
14. City staff and the project architect will monitor the work completed by the contractor to ensure that it is done according to the drawings, specifications and agreement. A pre-construction meeting and one to two field inspections will be completed, depending on the size of the project.
15. Once work is completed, City staff and the architect will review the completed improvements to ensure that the agreed upon design had been executed correctly. Once this is done the applicant will sign the **Application and Certificate for Payment** and submit it along with copies of paid invoices for their reimbursement to City staff.

For More Information:

If you have any questions on whether your project qualifies or to request a program application, please call **Christine Lebron** at the City of Oakland Redevelopment Division at **(510) 238-3993** or email **clebron@oaklandnet.com**.

For More Information on Loans:

The *San Pablo Avenue Golden Gate District Façade Improvement Program* is a reimbursement program offering matching 2-to-1 grants for up to \$60,000 after projects are completed. Façade Improvement Projects may qualify for small business loans with **OBDC Small Business Finance** to cover the upfront cost of improvements. For more information about OBDC Loan Programs and to find out if you qualify for a small business loan contact Roberto Costa at (510) 763-4297 ext. 103 or visit the OBDC website at www.obdc.com.