

The Redevelopment Agency of the
C i t y o f O a k l a n d
Presents the
W e s t O a k l a n d
Facade Improvement Program



BEFORE



AFTER

The Oakland Redevelopment Agency is pleased to offer a Façade Improvement Program for properties and businesses located within the key commercial corridors in the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area. Your business or property may qualify for a facade grant for physical improvements. If you need advice on how to improve your building facade, the City also offers a limited amount of design assistance.

The commercial zones within the West Oakland Redevelopment Project that are eligible* for façade grants include:

- San Pablo Avenue between I-880 and the Emeryville border
- Seventh Street between Mandela and Cedar
- Mandela between 3rd Street and Beach Street
- Martin Luther King Jr. Way between 23rd Street and W. MacArthur Blvd
- Market Street between 18th Street and 40th Street
- Peralta Street between 3rd Street and 38th Street

*Other projects within the Project Area will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Now that new retailers and investors are showing an interest in West Oakland, it is a prime time for business and property owners to improve the look of their buildings and storefronts. Improving your 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 revenues. For this reason, the Oakland Redevelopment Agency is offering a façade improvement program in West Oakland.

This manual provides an overview of the Façade Improvement Program. It describes the assistance available to you or your business 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 one of the façade target areas along an eligible commercial corridor 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 50% of the cost of your façade improvement, which may include the following:

- New paint job
- New awnings/canopies
- New signage
- Landscaping and exterior lighting
- Doors and storefront systems
- Window replacement
- Rehabilitation of historic facades
- Improvement & removal of safety grilles

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 applicant 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 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 project design must be approved by staff before the Reimbursement Agreement is signed. After the Agreement is signed, no design changes can be made without staff approval.
3. 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.
4. All contractors hired by program participants must be licensed contractors that meet minimum insurance requirements set forth by the Program.
5. Program applicants can be either property owners or tenants of commercial buildings. However, property owners and affected tenants must both sign the Grant Application in order to participate in the program.
6. 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 demonstrated agreement of the property owner.

Design Services

If you do not have your own architect, the Façade Improvement Program provides free architectural design services to eligible applicants. 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 Redevelopment staff member will work directly with property and business owners to create design improvements within the project budget that are compatible with the building and neighborhood. 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.

If you prefer to use an out-of-program architect, you are not eligible for the \$5,000 in design assistance. Designs by any architect must be pre-approved by staff before a Reimbursement Agreement is signed.

Grant Funding

Façade grants are based on linear foot measurements of the building façade. The Program will pay applicants up to fifty percent (50%) of the costs for eligible façade improvements, up to a maximum of \$10,000 for buildings measuring 25 linear feet or less. Building facades exceeding 25 linear feet are eligible for additional grant funding in increments of \$2,500 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.

Grant Maximums for Façade Lengths

Linear Feet of Façade	Maximum Agency Grant
25 or less	\$10,000
26 ó 35	\$12,500
36 ó 45	\$15,000
46 ó 55	\$17,500
56 ó 65	\$20,000
66 ó 75	\$22,500
76 ó 85	\$25,000
86 ó 95	\$27,500
96 or greater	\$30,000

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

The standard procedures for the Façade Improvement Program are as follows:

APPLICATION PHASE

1. Applicants interested in the Program complete the **Program Application** and return it to the designated Redevelopment Agency staff member. The application must be signed by all of the owners of the businesses involved and all owners of the property.
2. A Redevelopment staff member will screen the application and determine whether all information is provided and is accurate. Redevelopment staff will check records to determine whether the property is eligible for the program, that seismic upgrades have been completed, and that there are no pending code violation actions.

DESIGN PHASE

3. Redevelopment staff will meet with the applicant and an architect, either your own or one hired by the City, 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. Redevelopment 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 Redevelopment staff project manager 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 documents prepared by the project architect, the applicant gets estimates for work 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 are required to meet the requirements listed on the Program's "Contractor Requirements" form of the Reimbursement Agreement (see below).
7. The architect and Redevelopment staff will review the bids received for 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 Redevelopment staff project manager and the applicant, the finalized design drawings and the bids for the work will be submitted to staff and the **Reimbursement Agreement** can be filled out. The **Reimbursement Agreement** must be *filled out* and *returned* to the Redevelopment Agency **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 Contractor 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*.
9. All projects must comply with the City's current zoning and the *City of Oakland Small Project Design Guidelines*. Our program architects will work with applicants to ensure that projects are in compliance. Redevelopment staff and the program architects will assist the applicant in going through the Design Review Process.

CONSTRUCTION & PROJECT COMPLETION

10. The applicant will hire the contractor(s) and coordinate construction activities with the contractor. Redevelopment staff will not coordinate contractor's work. The applicant will have 30 days to authorize the contractor to begin construction from the date Redevelopment signs the Reimbursement Agreement. If the applicant has not authorized the contractor to begin construction within 30 days, the Redevelopment Agency has the right to terminate the contract and utilize the reserved grant funds for other applicants who are ready to proceed.
11. 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 the 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.
12. Contractor change orders will not be made without the prior approval of Redevelopment staff and the architect. Applicants are responsible for any approved change orders that may affect the approved bid price.
13. Redevelopment 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.
14. Once work is completed, Redevelopment 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 to Redevelopment staff with copies of paid invoices for their reimbursement.

For More Program Information:

Thank you for your interest in the West Oakland Façade Improvement Program. With a continuing partnership between local businesses and the City, we can achieve a dramatic facelift for the area within the next few years that will significantly improve the area's business climate. If you have any questions on whether your project qualifies or to request a program application, please call Hui-Chang Li at the City of Oakland Redevelopment Agency at (510) 238-6239 or write to hli@oaklandnet.com or 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 5313, Oakland, CA 94612.

For Loan Information:

The West Oakland Commercial Façade Improvement Program is a reimbursement program offering matching one-to-one grants after projects are completed. Additional small business loans are available through Oakland Business Development Corporation (OBDC) to cover the upfront cost of improvements. For more information about OBDC loans or to find out if you qualify for a small business loan contact Roberto Costa at (510) 763-4297 ext. 103 or roberto@obdc.com.