



CITY OF BELL GARDENS Commercial Facade Program

GUIDELINES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This project will provide grants ranging from \$6,000 to \$12,500 to assist small businesses along designated segments of Eastern Avenue, Florence Avenue and Florence Place with building facade and other general property improvements undertaken in accordance with established design guidelines. The design guidelines that have been prepared support the plans adopted by the Bell Gardens Redevelopment Agency to reverse the physical and economic decline of the City's commercial areas. The design guidelines address physical elements (architecture and signage) and functional relationships such as pedestrian linkage, vehicular access, and the availability of off-street parking. CDBG funds will be used to provide grants to participating businesses and to make available the design services of a professional architect/urban designer. Direct grants of up to \$6,000 will be available for minimal facade improvements such as painting, signage, awnings and correction of code violations. An additional matching grant of up to \$6,500 will be available for more substantial (i.e., structural) improvements. Therefore, the total assistance that could be provided per property is \$12,500. Applications for assistance will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.

LOCATION

Participants must be located on Eastern Avenue between Watcher and Lubec Streets and between Live Oak and Shull Streets, Florence Avenue between El Selinda and Garfield Avenues, and Florence Place between Toler and Garfield Avenues.

FUNDING AMOUNTS

Preliminary architectural design services are available free of charge to eligible property owners and merchants. (A professional designer will provide conceptual design plans to help merchants visualize a rehabilitation project). The cost of construction drawings will be reimbursed once a project commences.

Property Owners	-	\$6,000 Direct Grant and 50% reimbursement of qualified expenditures up to a maximum of \$6,500 for a total of \$12,500.
Merchants	-	\$6,000 Direct Grant and 50% reimbursement of qualified expenditures up to a maximum of \$6,500 for a total of \$12,500.

Note: A participating property owner cannot also receive a rebate as a merchant.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

All exterior improvements shall conform to the Eastern Avenue Project Phase I Commercial Facade Design Guidelines and the General Plan for the City of Bell Gardens. Interior improvements are not eligible.

I. Architectural Design Services and Procedures

- A. Applicants meet with City's Commercial Facade Program staff and program architect to review program guidelines and application process.
- B. Property owner submits a completed Program Application and a signed waiver and indemnification agreement.
- C. Consultation meeting is arranged between the property owner, City staff and the program architect at the building site. Architect will (a) assess buildings architectural style, significance, composition and previous alterations, (b) review preliminary architectural and structural recommendations and (c) establish a rehabilitation approach.
- D. Program architect prepares preliminary facade elevations illustrating proposed renovations including signage, color and materials in conformance with all commercial facade design guidelines and standards.
- E. Program architect presents the renovation design to the owner and/or tenant(s). As Part of the presentation, the architect shall prepare a preliminary cost estimate.
- F. City staff and program architect review the design drawings to ensure conformance with the Eastern Ave Commercial Facade design standards and City zoning requirements.
- G. Applicant may choose the program architect or an outside architect to develop final working drawings.
- H. Applicant submits a project packet which includes working drawings prepared by the applicants chosen architect, photographs of the building or storefront, color and material palettes of the proposed project.

II. Project Plan Review and Rebate Procedures

- A. City staff shall approve the application. Staff shall determine if proposed improvements conform to the Design Standards. If application is approved, staff will direct program architect to commence on working drawings.
- B. Applicant submits contractors' bids for work and staff determines if the bid chosen by the applicant is competitive.
- C. An approved project packet must include: 1) signature by City; 2) any written conditions of approval; and 3) the amount of eligible grant and/or rebate funds available once all work is performed satisfactorily. Work cannot begin until the project has been approved by the city.
- D. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the Building Department (if required) for issuance of a building permit. All new signage shall require issuance of

- a sign permit by the Planning Department.
- E. Changes to the originally approved design shall require re-approval by the City and in most cases re-approval by the Building Department. City staff will make periodic, informal inspection of work to assure compliance with approved design and conformance with Design Standards.
 - F. For rebates, once work is completed, applicant shall submit to the City detailed cost documentation, which may include canceled checks, paid invoices or payroll reports. Presentation of cost documentation will also require that the applicant sign a CERTIFICATE OF EXPENSE which verifies that all documentation submitted is true and complete.
 - G. City staff will make a final on-site inspection to confirm improvement compliance. If all work has been completed in compliance with the improvement plans and the required building permits have been FINALIZED, the City will process a request for payment to disburse reimbursement funds in accordance with the approved application.