



City of Lynn

Office of Economic & Community Development Commercial Façade Improvement Program

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Lynn Office of Economic & Community Development (OECD) has established a Commercial Façade Improvement Program which offers technical and financial assistance to property owners and tenants seeking to improve the appearance of their commercial storefronts (signage, lighting, awnings, etc.).

The program is part of the City's ongoing efforts to primarily help revitalize its Comprehensive Revitalization Area (CRA). The program's objectives are threefold; to enhance the physical appearance of storefronts and, thus the overall streetscape; to increase safety through additional appropriate storefront lighting; and to build a stronger customer base for individual stores and commercial districts.

The program will provide a grant of up to \$4,000 to be used for the fabrication and installation of façade improvements. The restoration of an historic storefront's signage and/or lighting may also be eligible. Community Development staff will be available to provide assistance to applicants through the conceptual design stage at no cost to the applicant. Applicants, however, will be responsible to hire qualified professionals to implement the City-approved designs, including installation.

Façade improvements made prior to approval of an application by the Department of Community Development will not be funded through this program.

II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All of the following criteria must be met for participation in this program:

- All applicants must be property owners or commercial tenants within the Comprehensive Revitalization Area (CRA) or a commercially designated areas;
- Property taxes must be paid to date;
- Tenants must have written approval from property owners to participate in programs;
- If deemed necessary by the Community Development, the applicant must clean facades before approval of funding (the cost of cleaning will not be covered by the City);
- Properties must be in conformance with State and local code requirements; and
- Applicants must comply with all State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing and permits.
- Applicants must comply with HUD/CDBG program requirements.

III. DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Façade improvements to be funded by the program must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual building as well as to the extent appropriate with other buildings along the street on which the participating storefront is located. This principle is particularly important for historic buildings and streetscapes. The addition or replacement of signage, lightning, etc. for buildings not having notably historic or architectural features should still be carefully considered and be seen as an opportunity to significantly enhance the appearance of the buildings and their streetscapes As improvements are being contemplated, the following basic design should be noted:

Scale - Will the size of the proposed signage and lighting be compatible to the size of the storefront and building?

Placement - Will the proposed placement of the signage be easily seen by potential customers? Will the proposed placement and intensity of lighting properly illuminate the storefront and window display without being a distracting element on the street?

Lettering - Will the visual message on the proposed signage be legible and attractive?

Color - Will the color scheme be compatible with the rest of the building's exterior and Design Review Committee recommendations?

Texture - Will the design and materials used provide an interesting three-dimensionality to make the storefront subtly stand out without being displeasing?

Attractiveness - Will all the above combined elements create an attractively cohesive storefront which will help draw customers into the business?

All improvements must comply with the standards set forth in the City's zoning ordinance, building code and sign ordinance.

A. Eligible Signage/Awnings

Signage/Awnings funded through the program must follow the guidelines outlined below:

1. Signage must be new or the restoration of historic signage;
2. Awnings must be of canvas or similar material. The use of plastic or vinyl material is **not** permitted. All awning materials and designs must be approved by the Department of Community Development
3. Signage must be made of durable material;
4. May include the business name, street address, phone number, type of business, business logo, and other business related symbols /pictorials;
5. Must not contribute to or produce a cluttered storefront appearance;
6. Interior signage must enhance the storefront and be easily visible from the street
7. Awning or canopies may also serve as signage (i.e., display business name and or the other relevant information, logos, symbols or pictorials):
8. Color scheme and size must be complementary to building facade;
9. Must not display brand name products;
10. All other signage may be considered and approved under the reasonable discretion of the Department of Community Development.

B. Eligible Lighting

Lighting funded through the program must follow the guidelines outlined below:

1. Must be new or the restoration of historic lighting;
2. Must only be for the purpose of illuminating storefront or adjacent on-site parking;
3. May illuminate signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of building facade.
4. Must be installed in a manner that will prevent direct light from shining onto any street or adjacent property.
5. Intensity of illumination must be appropriate for area to be lighted as determined by industry standards:
6. Type of lighting (i.e. gooseneck lamps, studio lights, etc.) must be appropriate for location on/in storefront and for the type of business; and
7. All other lighting may be considered and approved under the reasonable discretion of the Department of Community Development.

C. Prior Improvements

Alterations and improvements made prior to receiving an "Acceptance Notice" from the Department of Community Development are not eligible for reimbursement.

D. Alterations

The applicant must agree not to change or alter the façade improvements without prior written approval from Department of Community Development for five years from the date of the grant check issued under the Commercial Façade Improvement Program.

IV. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

A. Financial Assistance

The City will offer a maximum grant of \$4,000 to applicants who successfully complete the agreed upon commercial facade improvement activities. The applicant will be responsible for incurring façade improvement costs in excess of \$4,000. Applicants will receive a grant reimbursement check from the City after the applicant has paid the contractor(s) and vendor(s) in full and after the project is determined to have been completed by the Department of Community Development in accordance with the agreement between the City and the applicant.

B. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided free-of-cost to prospective applicants by City staff. Community Development staff will provide guidance on signage and lighting improvements specific to individual storefronts. With the review and approval by Community Development staff, a conceptual design based upon discussions with the applicant will be prepared. The applicant is expected to hire signage and lightning professionals to carry forth this conceptual design, from obtaining further detailed specification to ordering customizing the signage and lighting to installation. The City will monitor the progress of the project to ensure compliance

with the requirements.

A meeting should be scheduled with City Staff upon the preparation of an application in order to help avoid misunderstandings as to the eligibility of the proposal.

V. PROCEDURES

All prospective applicants must follow the procedures in the order outlined below:

1. Applicant calls City staff for initial project discussion;
2. Applicant files an application with Community Development;
3. Applicant meets with City Staff to further discuss program and design alternatives;
4. City Staff will assist with preparation of conceptual design and budget estimate to applicant and OECD for review;
5. Applicant will obtain proofs/rendering of improvements from signing/lighting professional.
6. Upon approval of design by Department of Community Development will send an "Acceptance Notice" to the applicant;
7. Applicant has sixty (60) days to solicit and submit quote(s) for each improvement from signage and lighting contractors/vendors. It is required that the applicant obtain a minimum of two quotes to ensure the appropriateness of costs incurred for services to be provided. Signage/Awning proposal must include drawings and color scheme and must indicate materials to be used and locations(s) to be installed on facade. Lighting proposals must include drawings or pictures from catalogue, if applicable, and must indicate types(s) of lighting, color(s) locations(s) to be installed and illumination intensity of individual lights;
8. If all the quotes reflect the proposed improvements discussed in the conceptual design, applicant will with the City of Lynn;
9. OECD sends applicant an "Acceptance Notice". **Any work prior to receiving the "Acceptance Notice" will not be reimbursed;**
10. Applicant has thirty (30) days from the date of the "Acceptance Notice" to begin implementation of approved improvements. **Any changes to previously agreed upon must have prior approval of OECD before the start of work.** It is up to the applicant to notify OECD of these changes;
11. Applicant enters into agreement(s) with the signage/awning and lighting contractors(s) and vendor(s) to carry out design, order lighting fixtures, and install signage/awnings and lighting. These particular agreements are solely between the applicant and contractor(s)/vendor(s) and are not the responsibility of the City;
12. Applicant notifies OECD when project is completed;
13. City staff determines whether or not improvements were made in compliance of drawing/pictures and specifications. The applicant must submit to the OECD copies of all paid invoices and cancelled checks to contractor(s)/vendor(s); and the Office of Economic & Community Development issues a grant reimbursement check. OECD reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.

VI. TERMINATION

The City of Lynn has the right to terminate any agreement under the Commercial Façade Improvement Program if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines or if the project has been started prior to an executed agreement with the City of Lynn.

VII. APPLICATION AND INFORMATION

If you wish to participate in the program and would like to set up a meeting with the Commercial Façade Improvement staff or if you would like additional information, please contact the Department of Community Development at (781) 586- 6770 or facadeapplication@lynnma.gov