Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program: *Guidelines*

Purpose
The Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program was created for the purpose of encouraging private investment in the restoration of building facades in downtown Bessemer City. This program encourages architecturally appropriate improvements to commercial building fronts. The grant also encourages and requires renovations that follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation for historic structures.

Improving the physical appearance of downtown buildings will promote economic growth by attracting and retaining businesses, enticing customers, and halting property value deterioration in the district. In addition, this program will help preserve downtown's unique physical resources and attributes.

Award Distribution
Due to the competitive nature of the Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program, awards will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis until funds have been expended. After submission, the staff reserves three (3) weeks for the application to be reviewed and evaluated with the scoring sheet. City staff will notify you of the approval or denial of the application.

Goals

- To promote façade rehabilitation of commercial and mixed-use buildings in the downtown area
- To preserve special characteristics of this area by helping owners make quality building improvements that foster a sense of place and overall consistent image for the area.
- To complement public/private revitalization efforts, such as sidewalk and landscaping improvements.
- To promote an attractive environment for new investment and business activity.

Eligibility

- The building must be located in the City Center (CC) and used for or intended for commercial purposes.

- Façade is defined by walls facing main roads. Alleyways are not considered main roads.
- The applicant may be either the owner or a tenant of the building (the tenant will need to have writtenpermission from the owner).
- Final determination of eligibility will be made by recommendation of the Façade Review Committee and final approval from the City.

Grants

- The City will consider applications for grants of up to fifty (50%) percent of eligible costs.
- The maximum grant is $5,000.
- The maximum amount will be determined by the applicant's investment amount.
- Matching grant payments will be made in the form of reimbursement upon completion of the project in a manner acceptable to the City.
- The City shall provide reimbursement within 90 days of submission, and approved, final documents (i.e., canceled checks)
- Applicants can apply once every two (2) years, per building, unless there is a change of hand in

property ownership or business.
- The City reserves the right to amend and/or discontinue the grant at its sole discretion.

Requirements

- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Supplementary Requirements for Development in the City Center (CC) district [as found in the LDC – Land Development Code) will be used as guidelines.
- Rehabilitation of a structure in the City Center (CC) should be considered a contemporary solution, which respects the architectural and historical integrity of the entire building while retaining those elements that enhance the building.
- All rehabilitation work must comply with all City codes, ordinances, and policies, including, but not limited to, building code requirements, local ordinances (including historic district guidelines, where applicable), and established design standards for the designated area.
- All projects must be completed within the agreed-upon timeline. Any extension beyond the agreed timeline must be requested by the owner and approved by the City, or the funds may be rescinded.
- Grants may only be used to finance exterior improvements.
- The City may request a minimum of two (2) quotes for each project element.
- Upon completion, the improvements will be inspected for determination of compliance as submitted in the application.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
The U.S. Department of the Interior developed ten national standards that address the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The standards describe a hierarchy of appropriate preservation treatments, which encourages ongoing maintenance and protection of historic properties to minimize the need for more substantial repairs and, in turn, values repair over replacement of historic features.

The 10 Standards are as follows:

- **1.** A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- **2.** The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- **3.** Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
- **4.** Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- **5.** Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

- **6.** Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- **7.** Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- **8.** Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- **9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historicmaterials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- **10.** New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Eligible Costs
Eligible costs can be included, but are not limited to the following:

- Paint removal from brick surfaces by chemical and/or water wash methods only.
- Repair of brick. stucco, tile, or stone elements.
- The removal of false fronts (such as wood or aluminum panels).
- Repair or replacement of windows, doors, and cornices.
- Repair or replacement of façade materials as approved by the City.
- Approved signage.
- Awnings of appropriate material and design.
- Exterior painting (if appropriate).
- Restoration of historic features.
- Redesign and reconstruction of store fronts (if appropriate).

Ineligible Costs
Ineligible Costs can include, but are not limited to the following:

- Interior rehabilitation or decoration.
- Any fees from required permits.
- Interior design fees.
- Roofing.
- Components detached from the façade of the building (i.e., A-frame signs, planters, etc.).

Disclaimer
The City reserves the right to disqualify the applicant from the grant if all program guidelines are not followed or for other reasons deemed appropriate by the City. In cases of disqualification, the applicant will forfeit all rights to reimbursement.
Should the applicant not submit the documentation, invoices, and proof of payment within 90 days of project completion, the grant will become void.

Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program: *How to Apply*

Step 1: Pre-Application (*to be completed by the APPLICANT*)

- ☐ Meet with City Staff before applying. Discuss the project, the process, and the time frame. This is also a time for the applicant to ask questions.

Step 2: Application (*to be completed by the APPLICANT*)

Submit completed application to City:

- ☐ Contacts Form
- ☐ Project Information Form Including:
  - ☐ Project Plans/Photos/drawings
  - ☐ Photos of current site
  - ☐ Color samples and finished textures (if applicable)
- ☐ Quote Tally Form; Quotes with letterhead and wet
- ☐ signature

Step 3: Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Review (*to be completed by the CITY*)

- ☐ Reviewed by the Design Review Committee (DRC)
- ☐ Additional information may be requested during this time to be reviewed
- ☐ Projects will be evaluated by the FIG Evaluation Scoring
- ☐

Step 4: Post-Application, Pre-Work (*to be completed by the APPLICANT*)

Once approved for the grant, but BEFORE any work begins, submit:

- ☐ Copy of permits (if applicable)
- ☐ Other documentation upon request

Step 5: Complete the Project (to be completed by *APPLICANT*)

Step 6: Reimbursement

Include:

- ☐ Copies of all invoices
- ☐ Copies of all cancelled checks for each paid invoice
- ☐ Signed waiver from each contactor (if applicable)
- ☐ Other receipts
- ☐ Other documentation upon request

Please direct all questions or concerns to the Department of Economic Development
(704) 452-8379 - abridges@bessemercity.com

NOTE:

1. The property owner is responsible for ensuring all work is consistent with the program and the design as approved. The City will be available for consultation and to provide clarification of the project's guidelines and intent.
2. The City must approve any changes in work and note such changes on the application. Action on changes may be deferred.
3. City Staff may conduct periodic inspections to ensure compliance with technical specifications.
4. Deviations from the approved application plan may disqualify the applicant from the grant program. In cases of disqualification, the applicant will forfeit all rights to reimbursement.

1. Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program: *Application Form*

CONTACTS

Applicant(s) Name: _____
Applicant Address: _____
City:_____State:_____Zip:_____
Phone:_____
Email Address: _____
Business Name: _____
Project Address: _____
Property Owner(s) Name (if different from above): _____

Does the applicant own the project building? **O** Yes **O** No (*if no, property owner must also sign below*)

The undersigned applicant(s) affirms:

- Work done prior to grant approval is not eligible for funding.
- The project will be completed within one (1) year from date of approval.
- I/we have read and understand the conditions, process, and guidelines of this grant program and agree to abide by its provisions.
- I/We acknowledge the project must meet certain requirements as required by the City.
- Acquiring all required permits is the responsibility of the applicant.
- The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my/our knowledge.

Applicant Signature:_____Date: _____

Owner Signature (if Applicable):_____Date: _____

Please submit Application to:

City of Bessemer City
ATTN: Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program Application
132 W. Virginia Avenue
Bessemer City, NC 28016

2. Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program: *Application Form*

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Description (Please describe what you anticipate to do. Also, please review the scoring sheet to understand what the review process will be looking for):

Project Start Date:_____Anticipated Completion Date: _____
Total Cost of Project (estimate):_____Grant Amount Requesting:_____

Preferred Contractor(s):

_____ Job:_____
_____ Job:_____
_____ Job:_____
_____ Job:_____
_____ Job:_____
_____ Job: _____

What permits will you need for this project?

PLEASE ATTACH:

- Project Plans, photos, and drawings
- Photos of current site
- Color samples and finished texture (if applicable)

Please direct all questions or concerns to the Department of Economic Development
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3. Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program: *Application Form*

QUOTE TALLY

Depending on the scope of your project and if you are required to submit more than one quote per project element (determined in your Pre-Application Consultation), please use the space below to outline each project element's set of quotes. All quotes should be attached to the grant application. Quotes must have a letterhead and a wet signature from the contractor you have requested the quote from.

EXAMPLE:

PROJECT ELEMENT: Painting

	Contractor Name	Location	Quote
QUOTE 1	John Doe	Bessemer City	$1,500
QUOTE 2	Jane Doe	Gastonia	$1,700

PROJECT ELEMENT:

	Contractor Name	Location	Quote
QUOTE 1			
QUOTE 2			

PROJECT ELEMENT:

	Contractor Name	Location	Quote
QUOTE 1			
QUOTE 2			

PROJECT ELEMENT:

	Contractor Name	Location	Quote
QUOTE 1			
QUOTE 2			

PROJECT ELEMENT:

	Contractor Name	Location	Quote
QUOTE 1			
QUOTE 2			

PROJECT ELEMENT:

	Contractor Name	Location	Quote
QUOTE 1			
QUOTE 2			

PROJECT ELEMENT:

	Contractor Name	Location	Quote
QUOTE 1			
QUOTE 2			

4. Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program: *Application Form*

OTHER FORMS

You are responsible for obtaining all necessary permits for your project. Staff recommends waiting to pull the permits until your grant has been approved. This way, if the grant application is rejected and/or if you decide not to go forward with the project, you have not wasted funds on permit fees.

Please complete the form below. The Planning and Code Enforcement Department will determine the required permit(s) for your project and notify you.

Applicant Name: _____
Applicant Email Address: _____
Applicant Phone Number: _____

1. Property Address: _____

2. Project Description:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Required Permits (to be completed by the Code Enforcement Officer)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

4. Required Variance and/or Meetings before the Planning Board/Board of Adjustments (to be completed by the Code Enforcement Officer)

1. _____
2. _____

Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) Program: *Evaluation Scoring*

Applications to the FIG Program will be evaluated using this scoring system. Projects must receive a score of 20 or more and meet all other program requirements to be considered for funding.

IMPACT: *Certain buildings and businesses are important to downtown's character because of their location, size, and/or architectural details.*	**Points**
Key, highly visible elements of the building will be improved.	1 2 3 4
The building is highly visible due to its location (prominent intersection, larger than surrounding properties, etc.).	1 2 3 4
Improvements will significantly impact revitalization efforts in downtown.	1 2 3 4

DESIGN: *some changes may benefit a property's aesthetics significantly.*	**Points**
The plan is consistent with the downtown design guidelines.	1 2 3 4
Proposed improvements will enhance the aesthetics of the building.	1 2 3 4
The proposed work complements neighboring property.	1 2 3 4
A professional designer contributed to the plan.	1 2 3 4
Historic characteristics are enhanced and/or restored.	1 2 3 4

SUSTAINABILITY/PERMANENCE: *some improvements have a greater, lasting value than others and will remain relevant to the property over time. Priority will be given to project with significant permanence.*	**Points**
Improvements are more than temporary cosmetic touches. Improvements have lasting value and will secure the integrity of the property.	1 2 3 4
Project includes a maintenance plan for the improvements.	1 2 3 4
Applicant owns the building and plans to invest in additional projects.	1 2 3 4

JOBS: *projects that focus on job creation and overall expansion projects will receive priority.*	**Points**
Business is also working on an interior rehabilitation project to expand merchandise, services, i.e. needing additional staff.	1 2 3 4
Business plans on creating jobs in the process of improving their property. (Number of jobs estimated to be created).	1 2 3 4 OTHER: _____
This project will increase interest in the community and promote other business to make improvements or expand.	1 2 3 4

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NEW BUSINESS: *projects that focus on the development of a new business will receive priority.*	**Points**
Business type is new to downtown and is fitting for the district.	1 2 3 4
New business is rehabilitating a vacant and/or underutilized property.	1 2 3 4
New business increases interest in downtown and the amount of traffic (both pedestrian and motor vehicle).	1 2 3 4

BONUS:	**Points**
The project overwhelming positively impacts economic activity in the community.	1 2 3 4
The Project uses green technology and/or sustainable building materials that still follow all regulations, provisions, and guidelines.	1 2 3 4

TOTAL	