

Updated: July 2023

# Facade Grant Improvement Policy

Policy adopted by Concord City Council  
for Fiscal Year 2024



## Purpose

The purpose of the Downtown Facade Improvement Grant Program is to encourage property owners or business tenants to improve their properties and to provide ways to activate the cityscape. The program helps to increase the vibrancy of Downtown Concord and the City's identity by highlighting the uniqueness of the community's core. It also supports small business development, artistry, and creative placemaking.

Grant recipients may use funds for specified exterior building improvements including, but not limited to, lighting, signage, or awnings. Businesses must adhere to certain design guidelines and meet all program requirements detailed below to be eligible.

## Program Details

Grant applications will be accepted and reviewed on a "first-come, first-served" basis. Grants are only available to for-profit businesses and property owners within the Municipal Service District (MSD).

Grant amounts are up to \$5,000 within the MSD. Projects within the High Impact Area that align with current streetscape improvements construction are eligible for up to \$10,000 in grant money. Grant funding requires a 50% private match. Payments will not exceed \$5,000 (\$10,000 in High Impact Area) or 50% of the exterior rehabilitation costs, whichever is less.

In multi-tenant buildings, the tenants may apply for individual facade projects provided the owner consents to the improvements. Buildings that front more than one street are eligible for grants on each street. Applications will be reviewed for adherence to Center City Design Standards and the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Redevelopment (if applicable). All applications will be reviewed by a staff committee appointed by the Planning Director.

Qualified projects completed since June 1, 2022, for which an applicant has not previously applied for the corresponding facade improvement grant, may be submitted for retroactive funding within the program guidelines and documentation showing the expenditures must be submitted.

### Qualified improvements for facades include:

- Removal of false fronts (such as aluminum panels)
- Repair or replacement of windows, doors, and cornices

- Repair or replacement of facade materials
- Creation of outdoor patios or decks
- New permanent signage and new awnings (signage cannot be painted on the windows)
- Exterior painting (new associated with a planned/funded rehabilitation effort)
- Design and construction costs

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Property must be located within the MSD Building must be a for-profit business or mixed-use development
- If the applicant is a tenant, they must have written approval from the property owner supporting the improvements to be made and agree to the terms and conditions of the grant award
- Building must be a pre-existing structure that cannot be less than ten (10) years old at the time of the application submittal
- Building must have an active ground floor area and be accessible to the primary street Project must adhere to City zoning requirements
- Building must have street frontage
- Applicant must have all required permits
- Facade must adhere to predetermined guidelines:
- Secretary of the Interior Standards for Redevelopment (if applicable).
- City of Concord Center City Design Standards
- Improvements made must remain with the property for a minimum of four (4) years following the disbursement of grant funds.
- If the funded improvements are removed from the property or damaged and not repaired within the four-year occupancy period, funds shall be repaid to the City. A monthly repayment plan may be utilized in ten (10) percent increments of the original grant reward.

## Disqualifying Factors:

- Properties shall not qualify for a grant if located outside the MSD, the building is newer than ten (10) years old, or if construction of the project starts before submittal or approval of application
- Design guidelines and standards are not adhered to in proposed projects or
- Constructed project did not adhere to approved plans
- Applicant stops responding to City staff for inquiry on project. Grant process will be suspended until communications resume.

## Application Details:

- The applicant must obtain all appropriate permits
- Applicant must fully complete a grant application, including submitting the required documents before staff will review application
- The City of Concord Planning and Neighborhood Development Department will review all applicants and determined eligibility
- Applicant has twelve (12) months to complete construction from the date of staff approval and notification

## Approval Criteria:

- Project Design
  - Project is well planned and ready for implementation
  - Cost is realistic and clearly described
  - Application includes clear plans
- Project Impact, Need, Visibility
  - Project is within the MSD
  - Project provides a response to a recognized need or opportunity
  - Project provides substantial and lasting benefit
- Historic Preservation
  - Project meets Secretary of the Interior Standards for Redevelopment
- Innovation and Beautification
  - Project is distinctive and attractive and complements the character of Downtown

## Grant Payments:

The City of Concord can make one payment at the completion of the improvement or if the applicant desires up to three partial payments can be made as the work progresses. Applicants must provide the following for a full or partial grant payment from the City:

- Itemized receipts for project cost
- Satisfactory proof that the project is completed according to plans submitted at the time of grant application
- Form W-9 completed in full

If the project is completed below cost, the City will not pay more than 50% of the total project cost.

