

BRENT LAMBERT
Mayor

LARRY SEWELL
Councilmember

ANDREW E. HYATT
City Manager



MARC GRAVITT
Vice Mayor

DENNY MANNING
Councilmember

JACKY CAGLE
Councilmember

City of East Ridge

1517 Tombras Avenue
East Ridge, Tennessee 37412
(423) 867-7711

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The City of East Ridge recognizes that a strong business district directly influences the overall health of the community by providing employment opportunities, public and private amenities, and goods and services to City residents and businesses.

The *purpose* of the *Facade Improvement Grant Program*, which targets commercial district businesses, is to revitalize the City's central business corridor, beautify the center of East Ridge, and promote high-quality redevelopment in the City, all elements of the City's economic and community development strategy.

The Facade Improvement Grant is intended to assist existing businesses and property owners in East Ridge within the commercial business district to make their property and business more attractive to both consumers and potential tenants.

The primary objective of the Facade Improvement Grant is to remove blight by assisting commercial property owners with improving building appearance and by bringing grandfathered signs, parking and landscaping into conformance with current codes within the commercial business district corridor.

Grant Program Funding

The City of East Ridge budgeted \$100,000 designated funds to finance the grant program. The program is a 50/50 matching funds grant. Businesses can apply for up to \$10,000 for a total cost of \$20,000 per project to be reimbursed after the project is

completed and approved by the staff. No costs shall be reimbursed unless the activity occurs after an application has been submitted and approved.

Projects shall be accepted and approved on a first-come-first-serve basis and will be accepted until all available funds are allocated. The Facade Improvement Grant Program is based on a calendar year and will be available for application starting January 1 of each calendar year.

Applications may be submitted throughout the calendar year. Grants will be awarded and property owners notified within one (1) month of submitting an application.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants will be applicants that are located in the commercial business district corridor (see-attached map for C-1/C-2 zoned businesses in red). To see if your business is eligible, please call 867-7711 or come by City Hall during business hours.

Eligibility requirements are:

- Businesses that have been in operation for a minimum of three (3) years
- Owners of the building/property that owned property for a minimum of five (5)years
- If business is leased, the building/property owner must submit application and enter into the grant contract independent of any arrangements that a non-owner/business operator may make with the property owner
- Businesses/buildings must meet current building inspection/code compliance at the time of application. Applicants that meet previous code regulations or “grandfathered” structure should meet existing code requirements once the project is completed
- All real property taxes must be paid in full at the time of application
- The business must have obtained an East Ridge Business License to operate within the City limits at the time that the application is received

Ineligible Applicants

Prohibited businesses include adult-oriented businesses, new construction projects, businesses operating from residential property or residential uses and any structure not in compliance with City codes and regulations.

Special consideration may be given if the business is located within a multiple tenant building and not a standalone building.

Businesses or properties owned by City employees or City officials are not eligible for grant funds.

Eligible Projects

Projects that are eligible under the Facade Improvement Grant program are:

- Paint and masonry work – colors must be in the earth-tone family and sample colors/materials must be submitted at time of application or approved before application is submitted.
- Window replacement – projects that use energy efficiency methods will be given special consideration.
- Awnings – material used must be of a durable and fade-resistant nature.
- Roof Facade – if the roof can be seen as part of the Facade, it is eligible for funding. Roofs that are flat or cannot be seen as part of the Facade are not eligible.
- Signage – signage must meet City Code requirements. Refurbishing old pole or billboard signage is ineligible for funds. If signage is part of a multi-tenant building, all signs must match in element and look.
 - Unused pole/billboard signs must be removed as part of the project.
 - Signage projects must be included as part of a paint/masonry project unless building already meets Facade Improvement Grant Program standards.

- Landscaping and Parking Lots – if a building already meets paint and masonry color Facade Improvement Grant program standards or if a project includes paint and masonry work, landscaping and parking lot projects are eligible for submission. Drawings and landscaping materials list must be submitted with application.

Ineligible Projects

Projects that are ineligible to receive Facade Improvement Grant Project funds are:

- General maintenance projects – i.e. leaky roof replacement, rotten/broken boards, brick, glass, etc. – consideration will be given if the replacement elements are part of a paint/masonry project.
- Landscaping only – if a building does not meet the Facade Improvement Grant Program standards (color/materials), then a landscaping project is ineligible.
- Parking lot repairs and sealants only – parking lot improvements can be included with a landscape/paint/masonry project. If the building already meets Facade Improvement Grant program standards, then the landscape/parking lot project will be eligible for funding.
- Signage only – signage projects must be included with a paint/masonry project unless building already meets Facade Improvement Grant Program standards.

Design Guidelines

An attractive image is of key importance to the success of any commercial area. Facade and storefront improvements are one of the most effective proven ways of upgrading the image of individual businesses and the business district as a whole. The storefronts (the side of your building that faces the street) sell the business as well as the business district and City as a whole to customers and new tenants alike.

An attractive appearance combined with quality products, competitive prices and good service creates a compelling image that will increase commerce, profits, and community pride. The Facade Improvement Grant Program seeks to help property owners and

tenants accomplish this by removing blight, improving the appearance of buildings, and bringing parking, landscaping and signage into conformance with current codes.

The program provides 50% reimbursement for expenses related to eligible architectural renovations to commercial property located within targeted business district as identified as a business zoned C-1 and C-2.

Project Reimbursement

Once City staff approves an eligible project, the applicant business owner and the City must execute a grant contract with the City.

The total project cost shall not to exceed \$20,000 and the maximum reimbursement amount allowed is \$10,000 without exceptions.

Reimbursement shall be made only after the grant recipient has incurred the eligible project costs and properly submitted receipt(s) to the City of East Ridge Department of Finance and Administration. Before the grant amount is paid for reimbursement, the Codes Department Supervisor must determine that the expense has been spent on the improvements outlines in the project plan, especially if the project is to be completed in phases.

Should the applicant fail to make the full improvements submitted in the application or the business close in less than five years of the date of the executed grant contract, then funds shall be repaid on a basis proportional to the five (5) year time commitment under these grant program provisions.

For example, a business proposing a \$20,000 project that uses \$10,000 of Facade Improvement Grant funds should maintain the improvements during the five-year contract period. If the business closes in after the third year (60% of the way through the program), then the remaining 40% of the total Facade Improvement Grant funds (\$4,000) shall be repaid to the City of East Ridge for failure to complete the project as executed in the contract.

If a commercial tenant leaves the property and no business relocates in the property at that time, then the same applies in meeting the obligation for a business to operate for the five (5) year contract term. If a tenant relocates from a business utilizing Facade Improvement Grant funds, the owner has a maximum of six (6) months to find a tenant, which will add six (6) months to the contract so that a commercial business is in operation on the property for a total of five (5) years.

Facade Improvement Grant Program Guidelines

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE?

This guide is intended to help property owners applying for a grant project to understand what the City considers when reviewing a Facade Improvement Grant application. Understanding this will help project owners develop a well thought-out vision and scope-of-work for their project as well as help them submit a thorough and complete grant application. Incomplete program applications will not be considered.

Because every project is unique, this guide does not attempt to cover every situation. Instead, it offers basic information about physical improvements that have been proven effective in revitalizing commercial districts.

This guide is based on, among other things, the following established design principles:

- To promote retail activity and enhance the experience of the pedestrian;
- To create an attractive and safe retail environment;
- To reinforce business district character and architectural design; and
- To use good design concepts and high-quality durable materials.

Project Owners are encouraged to work with a professional such as an architect or contractor to help them develop a project scope of work.

Important Note to Applicants - The City has full and sole discretion for approving applications.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING PROJECT SCOPE:

Taking the time to consider your property's existing conditions and asking yourself basic questions will help you develop a good renovation plan and ensure a well-developed project proposal. Below are some things to consider.

Evaluate Current Conditions – Take time to consider your current building and site. Ask yourself what you do and do not like about your building's exterior and site conditions. What can you do to change the things you do not like? How can you

enhance the things that you like? Identifying this is a good first step towards developing a renovation plan.

Building Use – Consider your intended use of the building. What type of image do you want to present? How do you want your clients to feel when they come to you?

Character of Surrounding Buildings – Consider the overall character of the surrounding area and business district. For example, if neighboring buildings are predominantly *retail* in nature you should consider staying away from *light industrial* characteristics.

Proximity to Residential Use – If a residential area is near your property, ask yourself what you would want a business to look like if it were located adjacent to the neighborhood you live in. This can help you identify opportunities that exist to make improvements and problem areas that need to be addressed.

Notice Other Buildings – Make an effort to notice other buildings and especially those that have a similar shape to yours. The more you begin to think about how to improve the appearance of your property the more aware you will become of design elements and site conditions of the buildings around you. Notice things such as doors and windows, light fixtures, canopies, color schemes & paint patterns, decorative murals, landscaping details, handicap accessibility and site conditions.

Remember, if approved for participation in the program your project will receive funding from East Ridge taxpayers. Ask yourself if your neighbors, both the businesses and residents in your area will be proud to participate in your renovations. Consider work that will have a lasting impact and that will improve the overall economic health of the district, including nearby businesses and surrounding neighborhoods.

PROJECT GUIDELINES AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Storefronts and Entrances – Buildings with multiple storefronts should be unified using architecturally compatible materials, colors, awnings, signage and lighting.

Wall Materials – Wall materials such as brick and stone should be repaired and maintained. When individual pieces of brick or stone are beyond repair they should be replaced to match originals in terms of size, color, finish and texture. Masonry surfaces should be properly tuck-pointed to avoid moisture seepage and excessive wear on the masonry. Less durable materials are not recommended but can be considered.

Blank Walls – Blank walls that are visible from the public right-of-way should be treated in a manner that will add interest to the wall. This can be achieved in many ways such as adding nonstructural, architectural elements, introducing color, installing windows and storefronts, incorporating decorative lighting, murals, etc. Blank wall mitigation does not include stand-alone landscaping to hide the wall, however, a trellis attached to a wall with climbing vegetation (living wall or green facade) may be considered. Anything other than solid paint colors in the approved pallet must be approved during the application process, submitted with a design sketch with application.

Windows – Storefront windows should allow views into the building. Clear glass should be used for storefront windows; tinted, spandrel, mirrored or opaque glass should be avoided. Glass block may be considered as an accent application.

Window openings should not be reduced in size. If original openings have previously been altered or filled in, the openings should be restored to their original size and configuration to every extent possible. All broken and missing windows should be replaced with new glass. Window frames and sashes should be repaired. Special consideration will be given to those using energy efficient windows.

Storefronts should not be boarded-up or covered with signage of any kind, nor should window space be reduced. Mirrored or heavily tinted glass is discouraged. Visual access into retail stores is important. If you have security concerns, consider using break-resistant glass and interior roll-down bars. Avoid exterior bars.

Awnings – Durable materials should be used when new awnings are being considered, whenever possible. This will enable the project to have a positive impact on the business district for a longer period. Permanent awning materials such as metal are preferred over other materials. There are many innovative metal canopy styles available today that can complement every project.

Existing awnings that are faded, stained or torn should be replaced. Awnings should be mounted in a location that respects the original design of the building, such as storefront bays and following window and door patterns.

Signage – The major purpose of a commercial sign is to identify a business and its merchandise and services. Signs should not be large and overbearing or cluttered with excessive information. They should be simple and coordinated with other neighboring signs.

Randomly located signs, signs containing too much information, too many signs, and signs that are too large for individual shops and neighborhood shopping areas are often hard to read and easily missed by pedestrian shoppers and drivers. Such signs can give local shopping areas a cluttered, confusing and unattractive image. Simple signs with a consistent size and location from one storefront to the next make locating businesses easier. Signs in East Ridge require a sign permit. Learn more about our sign ordinance by visiting <http://www.eastridgetn.org/Documents/Sign-Ordinance.aspx>.

Signs should be constructed of durable high-quality materials and should be kept well maintained. Plywood, plastic, and styrofoam should not be used. Electrical transformer boxes, conduit, and raceways should all be concealed from public view. If a raceway cannot be mounted internally (on the inside of the building), the exposed metal surfaces should be finished to match the background wall or integrated into the overall design of the sign.

Signs mounted in a similar construction material (e.g., brick or stone) to that of the building is strongly encouraged.

Unused electrical equipment should be removed. Signs for prior businesses, illegal signs, roof signs, billboards and unused structural sign supports should all be removed. Replacing non-conforming grandfathered signs with new, conforming signage is an eligible expense under the program.

For example, many older shopping centers often have too many signs. If such conditions exist and you are voluntarily willing to remove all grandfathered signs and replace them with new signs that fully conform to the current sign ordinance, these expenses may be eligible for reimbursement under the grant program.

Often we will ask about your sign design and color scheme. We do this so that we can fully understand how new signage will fit into the overall scope of work you are proposing. A design sketch/rendering of the proposed sign and location of said sign must be submitted with the application.

Security Grilles – Security grilles, screens and enclosures should be as inconspicuous as possible and compatible with other elements of the storefront. All window and door security bars and gates visible from the public right-of-way or parking areas should be installed on the inside face of doors and windows.

If a building currently has exterior bars and gates over windows and doors, they should be relocated to the interior of the building as part of the renovation project. Any exposed portions of the grilles, screen or enclosures should be painted. Less obtrusive

devices and alarm systems are preferred. If exterior grilles are preferred, consider installing roll-down or scissor gates to provide greater aesthetic impact to your building.

Maintenance – Generally speaking, maintenance alone is not eligible for participation in the Facade Improvement Grant program unless it is part of a larger qualified project. Replacing a roof, repairing broken glass, replacing rotten wood and repainting a building are considered general maintenance activities and not eligible for participation in the grant program.

Repairs that are required to meet minimum building code standards are also not eligible for participation in the program. If, however, exterior building repairs and maintenance are part of a larger renovation project, they may be given consideration. For example, a project that involves a complete renovation of the exterior of a building including adding new storefront windows and doors while at the same time repairing broken windows (maintenance) is eligible to apply for consideration.

Every project is unique and will be evaluated on its own merits. If you believe that your project only needs general maintenance work, then begin to consider other design elements that you could add to improve the appearance of your building.

Things like adding exterior decorative light fixtures, installing a metal canopy and planting trees can make a difference. Again, every project is different and will be evaluated base on the merits of each project.

Parking Lots – Repaving, repairing, sealing and/or restriping a parking lot is not eligible for participation in the grant program unless it is part of a larger renovation project. Expenses relating to bringing grandfathered parking lots into conformance with current parking and landscaping codes are eligible for reimbursement under the program.

Landscaping – When it comes to landscaping, installing trees and shrubs to meet current codes is eligible for reimbursement. Although installing annual or perennial flower garden may improve the appearance of your site, unless they are required by current codes, costs associated with this type of landscaping are generally not be eligible for grant funds.

Examples of eligible landscaping expenses include: 1) planting trees within the required distance of parking spaces; 2) planting shrubs to screen parking; and 3) planting trees and/or shrubs as buffers to residential property,

Applicants are encouraged to use trees and shrubs that are indigenous to the area and region, because these tend to be less costly to maintain and have a greater chance of flourishing after planting. Additionally, year-round planting such as furs, holly bushes and similar plantings are encouraged to provide high quality landscape design throughout the year, regardless of seasonal changes.

Fencing – Fencing that is visible from the public right-of-way should be decorative in nature. Chain link, barbed and razor wire fencing is discouraged. If a building currently has such fencing visible from the public right-of-way or abutting residential property it should be removed altogether or replaced with decorative fencing as part of the renovation project. If new fencing is proposed to be installed in an area visible from the public right-of-way or abutting residential property it should be decorative. For projects with abutting residential property, proper screening materials and buffers should be considered.

REQUIRED DRAWINGS:

Although small projects may not require a formal rendering (also referred to as an elevation), most often a drawing will be required for your project. Keep in mind that to give your application full consideration, City staff needs to understand definitively what you are proposing to do to your building and site. Having a conceptual drawing, and particularly one in color, will assist with this and will help facilitate the review and approval of your application.

PERMIT INFORMATION:

Building Permits

Permits are required for all additions, alterations and new construction, as well as many types of repair work. For example, replacing window frames & windows, or a change in the number of doors and windows, requires a building permit. Building permits must be clearly displayed at the construction site. Building permits are issued at East Ridge City Hall, 1517 Tombras Avenue, East Ridge, TN 37412 Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, holidays excepted.

Land Development Reviews & Permits

Projects involving site work or a change-of-use may require additional permits. Call the Codes/Building Inspection Department at 867-7711 or visit City Hall at 1517 Tombras Avenue, East Ridge, TN 37412 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. -5 p.m., except holidays.

Sign Permits

All new signs and most sign alterations require a permit. Information about sign permits can be obtained by calling the Codes/Building Inspection Department at 867-7711 or visit City Hall at 1517 Tombras Avenue, East Ridge, TN 37412 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. -5 p.m., except holidays.

Fire Prevention Inspections

Fire inspections are required for all projects and may be required for your specific project. Project owners are encouraged to schedule the inspection before work commences and particularly if the building has not been inspected in the last 12 months. Contact the Codes/Building Inspection Department at 867-7711 to schedule an inspection.

Contact Information

Please contact Melissa Mahoney at mmahoney@eastridgetn.gov or (423) 867-7711 to request for application materials, or for more information.

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT FUNDS APPLICATION PROCESS

No improvements are to begin prior to City of East Ridge approval *and both parties signing the Façade Improvement Grant Agreement*

1. Completed application packets are to be submitted to the City of East Ridge. Mail or hand deliver the application with all attachments to:

Melissa Mahoney
City of East Ridge
1517 Tombras Ave.
East Ridge, TN 37412

2. A Review Committee made up of Building Inspection and Codes staff will review applications for consistency with Façade Improvement Grant Program criteria and existing building and property codes.
3. Once the committee reviews, ranks, and selects an application, the application packet will be sent for review and approval by the City Manager.
4. If applicants wish to appeal a decision made concerning the final selection of a grant application, then the City Manager will review the application packet and request for a second review and determine whether to proceed with awarding the applicant the grant award.
5. Award of funding is subject to approval by the City of East Ridge based on the criteria herein.

NOTE: In no way does eligibility of a business or project obligate the City to fund a project. Only approved projects will receive funding as specified under the provisions herein.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS:

1. If approved by the City of East Ridge, property owner may then proceed to begin work (proper City of East Ridge building permits required before any reimbursement is processed).

2. Upon full completion of the improvements, in whole or in phases, the property owner should deliver copies of any eligible project receipts for the improvements listed on the initial application to the City of East Ridge so that the city can reimburse the grantee.
 - a. If the project will be completed in phases, a description of the work in phases must be submitted with the application.
 - b. Prior to reimbursement, phased project where work is completed in different stages, will require that the Codes Division Supervisor approve the reimbursement of receipts to ensure that the expenses shown on receipts are directly linked to the project work plan and phase under development at the time of the request.
3. Receipts must clearly demonstrate that the applicant has paid the contractors and/or suppliers in full. Each receipt must clearly cite the applicant as the payor. If the applicant's name is not listed on the receipt as such, any costs contained therein will not be reimbursed. Additional improvements not approved as a part of the original application and contract will not be reimbursed.
4. Copy of the release of contractor lien on property, if applicable.
5. Property owner must provide copies of all applicable City of East Ridge building permits and completed inspection reports obtained for improvements when submitting receipts to ensure that the status with the Building and Codes Inspection Division is in compliance.
6. Color photo essay of completed project before final 10% of the total disbursement.
7. All copies of receipts, permits, inspection reports, releases and photos must be submitted at same time as the color photo essay in #6. Only one reimbursement check will be processed for the final 10% of the project costs (\$1,000). There will be no partial reimbursements for the final 10%
8. Any documentation submitted by the property owner becomes public record and will be kept on file with the City of East Ridge.

BRENT LAMBERT
Mayor

LARRY SEWELL
Councilmember

ANDREW E. HYATT
City Manager



MARC GRAVITT
Vice Mayor

DENNY MANNING
Councilmember

JACKY CAGLE
Councilmember

City of East Ridge

1517 Tombras Avenue
East Ridge, Tennessee 37412
(423) 867-7711

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT)

Applicant's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Property Address: _____

Business Name: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Description of Planned Improvements (You may attach additional typed/printed sheets if needed):

(Please see next page for additional site documentation required)

Total Cost of Project \$20,000

East Ridge Funds Requested \$10,000

ADDITIONAL SITE DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Please attach the following:

- All detailed exterior building elevations, height and scale element.
- Color sample(s) specifying exterior surface treatment.
- Landscape plan (if applicable)-Show location, type and size of planting(s).
- Color photographs of subject site features and adjacent properties and buildings.
- ***If the project is to be completed in phases, the city must receive a plan that shows and explains what work for each phase, timeline for each phase, and associated costs for each phase making up the total project.**

For signage, attach the following:

- _____ Dimensions, lettering style and sizes, materials and mounting details.
- _____ Color samples and colors noted on drawings.
- _____ Lighting details including type, intensity and mounting specifications.
- _____ Building elevations for all wall signs illustrating dimensioned location of sign.
- _____ Survey showing location of free-standing sign. Landscape drawings must also be provided indicating size, type and location of material for all freestanding signs.
- _____ Photos of signs on abutting and subject properties.

Please Read: By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the instructions associated with this program. I understand that if I fail to abide by the instructions, my application may be disqualified and repayment of some or all funds shall be required per provisions herein. I further acknowledge that I understand that funding for the Façade Improvement Grant Program is limited. As such, there is a risk that even if my application meets all requirements, I may not be approved for funding in this program year.

Signature & Date

Signature *Date*

END OF APPLICATION

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before you submit the application, verify that you have attached/completed each of the following. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

- _____ Copy of Deed/Proof of Ownership
- _____ Copy of business license of business operating on the property
- _____ Estimates/quotes/bids for all costs associated with the project from a licensed architect, engineer or contractor ("Sweat equity" hours will not be credited).
- _____ Complete, written description of all rehabilitation work planned (typed or printed).
- _____ Breakdown of the work into phases, if the project will be completed in different stages and the grantee will seek reimbursable funds before the end of the project instead of a one-time basis.
- _____ Additional site documentation requested in application.
- _____ Evidence (such as a letter from your banker) of available private funds to pay for the rehabilitation. The Commercial Facade Program is a reimbursement program in which funds are paid to owners after receipts have been given to the city showing that all contractors and subcontractors have been paid in full.
- _____ Proof of insurance coverage (Please ask your insurance agent for the Insurance Coverages Form).
- _____ Signature and date on application.

REMEMBER:

DO NOT BEGIN ANY IMPROVEMENTS PRIOR TO THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE APPROVAL AND BUILDING PERMIT ISSUANCE.