

## **City of Bath Façade Improvement Grant Program**

The Façade Improvement Grant Program will promote economic development and stimulate business opportunities through a public-private partnership that offers economic incentives for the renovation, restoration, and preservation of the exterior of commercial and mixed used properties throughout many of the commercial areas in the City of Bath. The goals of the Façade Improvement Grant Program are to:

- Increase the economic vitality and encourage private investment within core commercial zones in the City of Bath
- Enhance the appearance of the streetscape in the downtown area and along the commercial corridor into the City
- Strengthen or restore the original character of historic buildings
- Allow for expanded commercial opportunities within the City of Bath
- Act as a catalyst for continued investment and upkeep in commercial and mixed used properties within the City of Bath

### **Program Guidelines and Eligibility**

The City of Bath, through funding from the BIW TIF District, will be able to offer approximately \$300,000 from 2020-2022 (\$100,000 dispersed per year) for façade improvement. Annual funding will be subject to approval by the City Council during normal budgeting process. The grant funds will be awarded on a competitive basis. Grant funding is available for up to 50% of the total cost of the project or up to \$10,000, whichever is less (matched by cash only). Each applicant may be awarded only one grant per calendar year.

The following guidelines will apply for all projects:

- The property owner must be the grant applicant. Business owners renting or leasing space are encouraged to work with their building owner to develop an application.
- Each applicant may be awarded only one grant per calendar year but may apply for any subsequent grant round. For each applicant, past grant awards must be closed out before a new façade grant will be awarded.
- Only work on the exterior of a building that is visible from the primary means of travel at street level is eligible under this program.
- Commercial and mixed-use properties are eligible for grants. If a façade grant is utilized, the building must remain as a commercial or mixed-use property for at least three years following completion of the project. The building may be occupied or vacant.
- The project must be located within any of the following zoning districts: C1, C2, or C4.
- Structural changes proposed must be under the guidance of a qualified design professional.
- A professional sign and/or awning maker must produce any signs and awnings included in the project.
- The applicant must obtain all necessary approvals and/or permits from the City of Bath. No façade grant shall be made unless and until the proposed work has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate City staff and/or review committee. The proposed project may require

approval from the Code Enforcement Officer and/or the Planning Board. Projects that are located within the Historic Overlay District will require Historic District Review.

- The project applicant must be current on all property taxes, fees, judgements, or liens to the City of Bath.
- Grants will be distributed after the work has been completed and proof of payment to the contractor or vendor for materials has been provided to the City. If the work is completed by the building owner, only materials are grant eligible.
- Grants will be considered voided if the work has not been completed within three years of award.

### **Eligible Activities**

Eligible uses of façade grant funds are improvements to the exterior of existing buildings located within eligible areas, subject to review and approval. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- The repair, cleaning and/or painting of all visible surfaces of exterior walls
- The repair of deteriorated architectural features where possible or replacement only if necessary
- Americans with Disabilities Act compliance or accessibility improvements
- Renovation of the existing facades
- Repair or replacement of doors and windows
- Repair or replacement of awnings
- Repair, replacement or removal of exterior signs
- Repair or replacement of deteriorated gutters, downspouts, and rainwater leaders

### **Ineligible Activities**

Improvements/ expenses that are not eligible for funding from this grant include, but are not limited to:

- New construction
- Interior renovations
- Purchase of property/ equipment
- Roof repairs (unless immediately integral to the exterior façade improvement)
- Sidewalks or parking areas
- Building permits and related fees

### **Application Process**

Applications and guidelines for the Façade Grant program may be obtained from the City Managers' office or on the City of Bath website. A completed application will need to be received by December 31<sup>st</sup> at 4:30 P.M. in order to be eligible for the next grant round.

Applications will only be considered complete if the following are included:

- Full description of the project including an explanation of the specific proposed improvements as well as a proposed commencement and completion date
- Detailed photographs of the current condition of the structure
- A preliminary sketch of the proposed improvements is beneficial but not required

- A cost estimate for the project
- Proof of ownership of the property is required by the applicant.

All applications will be initially reviewed for program eligibility and funding by City staff. Eligible applications will then be forwarded to the Economic Development Committee for review. The City of Bath reserves the right to accept or reject any application.