

# **Commercial Corridor Revitalization Grant Program**



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# **TOWN OF HAMDEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM**

## **PURPOSE**

The Town of Hamden has allocated a portion of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for a commercial rehabilitation grant program in support of business improvements in the Community Development Target Areas.

The purpose and objectives of the program are:

- To eliminate substandard or deteriorating conditions in Community Development Target Areas;
- To promote a climate for reinvestment in revitalizing neighborhoods;
- To leverage CDBG funds with private funds as part of the larger effort to encourage revitalization of or revitalizing many of the Highwood business district;
- To restore or preserve the architectural integrity of property located along public roadways.

## **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

Buildings will be considered eligible for this program if they are located within a commercially zoned area of a Community Development Target Area, established by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development and the Town of Hamden Community Development Advisory Commission.

The new program expands the eligible rehabilitation activities into three separate subsets:

1. **Exterior Rehabilitation:** This category can include building facades, masonry, brick repointing, awning improvements, lighting, ADA improvements, entrance repair, restoration of architectural details, etc.
2. **Signage Improvements:** Replacement or refurbishment of business signage to enhance physical appearance of commercial corridors and increase business marketing opportunities.

3. **Landscaping and Infrastructure:** This new category allows eligible establishments to complete paving and sidewalk reconstruction, ADA improvements and landscaping to the exterior sidewalk and parking lots of areas visible from the street. Only ADA improvements can be completed in areas not visible from the street.

## **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Eligible applicants for the program shall include the following:

- Owners of commercial establishments in the Highwood Community Development (CD) Target Area and owners of any property located on in commercial or mixed-use zone area in the CD Target Area.
- Tenants in buildings described above, provided there is a minimum of a five-year lease in the building and their proposed work is permitted under the terms of their lease or has been approved in writing by the owner of the building. If a lease contains less than five years, the obligation goes to the owner to fulfill the complete five year lease if not renewed.

## **FINANCE AGREEMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The Town of Hamden Department of Community Development will competitively bid each project following the preparation of full project scope by the owner/applicant and the Department of Community Development.

Contractors will be selected by the Department of Community Development and the Town of Hamden Purchasing Department. A “Notice to Proceed” will be sent to the contractor when the project is formally awarded and all contract documents are in place.

In instances when an “owner’s match” of 25% is required, a business/bank check or money order made out to “Town of Hamden Department of Community Development” must be submitted at the time of contract signing and prior to commencing work. (Matching funds are not required for the Signage Improvement Program).

## **APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCESS**

Following is an overview of the application and grant approval process:

### **Step One: Pre-Application/Pre-Approval**

Eligible applicants in the Highwood Census Tract will be invited to submit pre-application proposals to the Department of Community Development. The pre-application shall include the address of the project, the name and address of the property owner, the name and address of the applicant (if other than the owner), and a general listing of the desired work. The pre-application will be reviewed by community development staff to determine if the applicant is eligible and what work is eligible under the program guidelines.

During this phase, the Department of Community Development will ensure that the applicant is in good standing with the Town with regard to the Tax, Building and Planning and Zoning Departments.

If found in compliance, the Department of Community Development will send the applicant a pre-approval letter along with a formal application packet to be completed.

### **Step Two: Application Review, Verification and Formal Approval**

Following receipt of a completed formal application packet, the Department of Community Development will review documents for final approval and notify applicant.

### **Step Three: Selecting the General Contractor**

The Town shall seek competitive bids for work to be performed on all projects estimated to have a project cost over \$2,000. Project under \$2,000 such as signage improvement projects shall be selected using a competitive quote process.

The Town will select the contractor for the project, in consultation with the project applicant. The Town is required to take the lowest qualified bidder on the contract, barring any unique circumstance. The contract for the work is between the Town and the contractor selected. All bondage requirements of the Town are applicable.

Applicants will be allowed to recommend qualified contractors to the Town for their project and such contractors will be sent an "Invitation to Bid" on the project.

#### Step Four: Grant Agreement

The applicant and Town will sign a Grant Program Agreement committing CDBG funds to the project. Once signed, a “Notice to Proceed” will be sent to the contractor and the contractor can begin work on the project.

In addition, the owner will sign a declining lien agreement that will reduce the liability at a rate of 20% each year for a 5-year period as long as appropriate or applicable requirements are adhered to.

#### Step Five: Payment

Payment will be made to the contractor once all building and zoning inspections and approvals are complete.

#### Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed upon their receipt by the Department of Community Development. When multiple projects are under review, the Community Development Advisory Commission will make the selections based on the following:

- a. **Economic Impact:** The degree to which the improvements will leverage other investments such as new tenants; interior property improvements or upgrades; and new ownership coupled with significant reinvestment in the building.
- b. **Blight Removal:** the degree to which the grant will improve a blighted property.
- c. **Visual Impact:** The degree to which the façade improvements will improve the aesthetics of the immediate surrounding area, will impact the streetscape, etc.
- d. **Landscaping and Site Improvements:** The degree to which the property owner and/or tenant will provide additional landscaping or site improvements to the property.
- e. **Historical Merit:** The degree to which the improvements will restore the original architectural integrity and proportions of the building which were lost due to inappropriate remodeling or neglect.
- f. **Matching Funds and timelines:** The extent to which the applicant can guarantee they will have matching funds available and will proceed in an expeditious manner with the project.

## General Conditions

In addition to the above criteria, the program is subject to the following limits and conditions:

1. All work proposed must conform to all Planning and Zoning regulations and guidelines.
2. Any proposed changes to the work approved in the Grant Agreement must be submitted to the Town for review and approval. The applicant must pay for any changes or project additions, other than for unforeseen conditions.
3. All façade work and grant applications must be approved by the Community Development Advisory Commission.
4. No grants shall be awarded to applicants who have outstanding debts to the Town including any fees, utility bills or property taxes.
5. Projects over \$2,000 are subject to the requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act the applicant's contractor must pay prevailing wages. The Community Development staff will assist in determining the Davis-Bacon wages and will monitor the job for compliance with these and other provisions of the Community Development Block Grant program.
6. No grants shall be awarded to an applicant who has outstanding building or fire code or zoning violations on the property proposed for renovations at the time the application is reviewed.
7. Any properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Townwide Historic and Architectural Survey of Hamden or determined to be eligible for such listing, will be rehabilitated according to the recommended approaches in "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings". This document and Preservation Briefs are on file in the Planning Department.

**TOWN OF HAMDEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR  
REVITALIZATION GRANT**

**PRE-APPLICATION**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_.

Please check one box

Tenant                       Owner

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Use of Structure: \_\_\_\_\_

List of Proposed Improvements In Order of Priority:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_.