



Downtown Facade Improvement Program

Program Overview

The City of North Augusta's Facade Improvement Program is intended to encourage revitalization in the downtown. This program provides grant funds to finance high-quality exterior improvements to a property owner's or tenant's building. The program is managed by the Facade Grant Design Committee, under the direction of the City Administrator and guidance of the Planning Director.

Program Purpose

The purpose of the program is to provide an opportunity for property owners and businesses to upgrade the exterior of their buildings to help retain and attract businesses, strengthen the downtown area, increase utilization of existing businesses, restore economic vitality, and enhance property values. The Downtown is the commercial core of the City of North Augusta and the prime area for infiltration of new businesses due to available property and high amounts of traffic along Georgia Avenue. This area is a major focus for beautification because of its importance to the city's image and ability to attract new residents and investment. See the attached Downtown Map for an outline of the properties.

Available Funding

The Program is a reimbursement program; payment will be issued to property/business owners upon completion of the project. The applicant is responsible for contracting out all design and construction related to improvements to the exterior facades of an existing qualifying building. The program is administered on a first come, first served basis, to the limit of available funding and in accordance with the City of North Augusta appropriated funds for the fiscal year. If the total value of funding requested, for all new applications in any given year, exceeds the total amount of funding available, all applications will be prioritized by the Facade Grant Design Committee in coordination with city staff.

Eligibility

Applicants eligible to apply for the grant funding include property owners or business tenants that are willing to improve the exterior facades of existing buildings that may be viewed from public spaces within the City of North Augusta's designated Downtown. Only those buildings with commercial use(s) at ground floor are eligible for grants. The City of North Augusta and Facade Grant Design Committee may make exceptions to these guidelines on a case by case basis, based on the project's influence on downtown development. Projects involving a previously funded building may be considered after completion of any previous projects. Owners may receive assistance for more than one building provided that funding is available. A maximum of one grant application per facade will be accepted per year. The City reserves the right to deny applications from businesses of non-conforming uses and from property and/or business owners who are delinquent on payment of taxes, fines or fees.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses are exterior improvements, new or upgrades, on building facades that are intended to improve the aesthetic appearance. All work must be completed by a licensed contractor legally operating in the City of North Augusta and meet the design guidelines for this program. These may include:

- Exterior signage
- Painting
- Awnings
- Storefront enhancements
- Surface treatments
- Outdoor lighting
- Redesign and reconstruction of the store front

Ineligible Expenses

Funds may not be used for improvements that are not permanent or mounted or affixed to the building or the sidewalk. Ineligible uses include but are not limited to:

- Vinyl letter signage (windows)
- Portable signs, such as sandwich board or A-frame signs; signs not mounted or attached to storefronts - Flags or banners
- Benches and trash receptacles
- Tables, chairs, or umbrellas
- Moveable structures and equipment
- Expenditures for ordinary repair and maintenance (i.e. cracked windows)
- Improvements that are enforced due to code violations
- Interior improvements

Additionally, the Facade Improvement Grant Program will not be applied retroactively to projects construction started prior to written approval of an application. The Facade Grant Program may be applied retroactively to cover professional fees, if the work is part of the approved project.

Façade Improvement Grants

Grants are available for upgrading the general appearance of eligible facades. The maximum allowable award is \$5,000 per project site (depending on the impact of the improvement on downtown economic development) with the property owner/business owner required to pay a match of at least 50% of the total project cost. For example, if the total project cost is \$10,000, the applicant must provide \$5,000 toward the project.

Design Standards

All proposed facade improvement projects must adhere to the respective zoning requirements. Facade Improvements must enhance the aesthetics of the downtown environment and celebrate the character of the individual buildings.

Materials and Colors

The use of natural facade materials is recommended. Vinyl and aluminum sheeting materials are prohibited. Exposure of underlying brick and other heavy masonry is recommended.

Awnings

Awnings are encouraged to promote a more comfortable experience for pedestrians and add to the appearance of downtown.

Signage and Lighting

Aesthetically-pleasing signage is recommended. These include wall-mounted signs, projecting signs and small signs on windows and doors. Projected signs and flat signs on the buildings above awnings are particularly encouraged. Signs must fit the character of the building. Lighting should provide a sense of comfort and accent the architecture of the building and the graphics of the signage.

Application Process

Property or business owners interested in applying for improvement grants should contact the City Administrator to set up an appointment to discuss the potential project prior to submitting an application. The City Administrator and Planning Director will advise the applicant as to the applicable standards for the project.

Application Package

An application package for a Façade Improvement Grant should include:

- A completed Façade Improvement Grant Application (Copies are available on the city's website at www.northaugusta.net).
- Verification of property ownership (Title or Deed of Trust) and, if a leasing business, a copy of the lease and consent letter from the property owner approving the proposed changes.
- Proposed written scope of project. This may include a description of improvements and/or sketches/photos of new sign, awning, paint colors and or facade improvements. Architectural plans, elevations and/or perspective drawings and sketches or proposed improvements.
- Color photos of the existing facades.
- Project completion timeline.
- Total estimate of project budget.

Staff will review the application package to confirm that it is complete and then present to the Façade Grant Design Committee for review and recommendation.

Applicants will be notified of approval, denial, or need for additional information within 30 days of the application. Any changes made from the original proposal must be

submitted and approved through the same process. Any unapproved changes will disqualify the applicant from the program. Unless otherwise previously approved by the city, the project must be completed within 4 months of the approval date in order to receive funding. A reasonable extension may be granted, based upon the good faith efforts of the applicant.

Distribution of Funds

Grant funds will be distributed upon completion of the approved façade improvement project and the following:

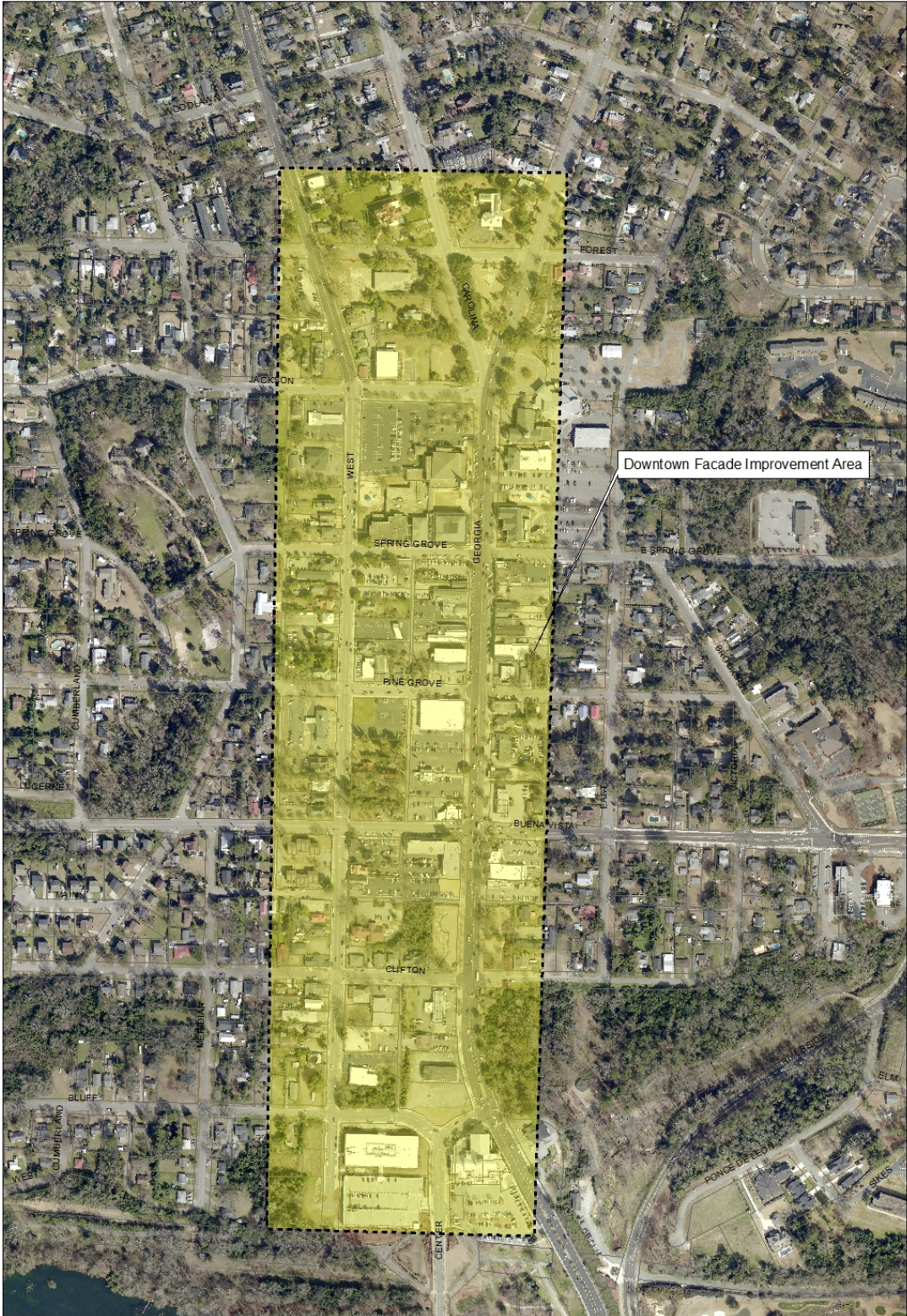
- Successful issuance and close out of all relevant permits, including construction, encroachment and sign permits.
- Final inspection and approval of completed project by the city's building codes office.
- Photographs, invoices and receipts are submitted to the City Administrator and certified as in compliance with the original application.
- Grant recipients agree to place a Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Recipient sign at the construction site throughout the project and for a minimum of 180 days upon completion of the project.

For More Information:

Planning and Development Department
planning@northaugusta.net
803-441-4221

Or

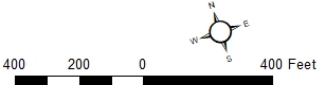
City Administration Office
803-441-4202



Downtown Facade Improvement Area



**Properties Located within the
Downtown Facade Improvement
Grant Program Area**



Date: 12/31/2019

City of North Augusta

Facade Grant Application



Business Name

Date

Property Address

Federal Tax ID Number:

Applicant Name:

Applicant Address:

Phone:

E-mail

Owner Information (if different than applicant)

Proposed Facade Improvements (please specify):

Scope of the Proposed Project (include a summary of the building's current condition, areas to be improved and how, as well as any proposed materials or colors):

Required Documentation (these items must be submitted with the signed Application):

- At least two color photographs of existing building facade.
- Photos, plans, or sketches of proposed improvements.
- Quotes, fee proposal, and any other back up that supports the proposed budget.
- Owner's permission, if necessary.

By checking below, I agree to comply with the guidelines and standards of the City of North Augusta Facade Grant Program and I understand that this is a voluntary program, under which the City has the right to approve or deny any project or proposal or portions thereof.

I agree

Applicant Signature (type name or print and sign to indicate acceptance):

Owner Signature (if different than applicant):

The complete application with all required documentation may be submitted to:

- Via email to planning@northaugusta.net
- Via mail:
Planning and Development Department,
City of North Augusta
PO Box 6400
North Augusta, SC 29861
- In person:
Planning and Development Department, 2nd Floor
100 Georgia Avenue
North Augusta, SC 29841

Attachment 2: Example Façade Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into this ____ day of _____, 20__, by and between the CITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA (City) and (Grantee), whose address is _____

Tax Parcel Number: _____

WHEREAS the City has approved a facade improvement grant to Grantee subject to the execution of this Agreement, and Grantee desires to accept the grant and to abide by the terms of this Agreement , and

WHEREAS the City has approved a grant in an amount of _____ and No/100 Dollars (\$0) for façade improvements at _____ North Augusta, South Carolina,

NOW THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1. Grantee reaffirms that all information provided to the City in its Facade Grant Application is correct and accurate.
2. Grantee has read and agrees to abide by the provisions and requirements of the City of North Augusta Facade Grant Program.
3. All work performed by Grantee will be consistent with the approval by the City. If Grantee desires to make any changes in the project, Grantee will obtain written approval from the City before implementing such changes. Grantee understands that the City is not required to approve any changes.
4. Grantee agrees to complete the improvements within four (4) months from the date of this Agreement and understands that failure to complete the improvements within such period will result in forfeiture of the grant, if an extension has not been granted.
5. Grantee understands that the grant will be paid to Grantee only upon completion of the work, submission of all dated statements or invoices to the City, and approval by the City of the completed work.
6. Grantee will notify the City immediately if Grantee's interest in the subject property changes in any way. This Agreement is not assignable by Grantee without prior written approval of the City, which will not be unreasonably withheld.

Grantee hereby grants to the City the right to use pictures, renderings, or descriptions of the work for any and all promotional purposes desired by the City.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have signed this Agreement on the day and year first written above.

WITNESSES FOR THE CITY

CITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA

WITNESSES FOR THE GRANTEE

GRANTEE

WITNESSES FOR THE OWNER

OWNER (if other than grantee)