



Façade Improvement Program Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Program Description

The Façade Improvement Program (FIP) is a reimbursement grant program provided to business and/or property owners for the improvement of existing buildings throughout the City of Vista. Targeted designated commercial zones within the City of Vista will receive funding priority. The program provides a matching grant of 50% up to the maximum dollar amount based on the building's linear foot frontage on a public way:

Linear Public Way Frontage (feet)	Maximum Grant Amount
10-49	\$ 5,000
50-99	\$ 7,500
100-149	\$ 10,000
150 or more	\$ 15,000

The purpose of the FIP is to induce private investment that results in quality improvements and enhancements to business-use properties. It is the City's intention that the FIP serve as a catalyst for significant aesthetic improvements to the commercial area in which the property is located.

The private investment will be equal to or greater than the grant funds awarded.

The Economic Development Department will administer the grant program (Program Administrator). The Planning and Building Divisions of the Community Development Department will handle project approval, processing and permitting. No commitment of funds will be made until the Planning Division has evaluated the project for code compliance, received a complete project application and advised the Program Administrator that it is appropriate to proceed.

Projects must be complete and collateral information must be provided to the Program Administrator before a grant will be processed for funding; no advances will be made of grant funds.

Projects must make an exterior improvement easily visible from public view. Grants will be given only for quality improvements done in a professional manner. A final inspection will be conducted to confirm the work has been completed and conforms to the approved plans, colors and/or materials.

Property or business ownership, by the grant applicant, must be maintained for a period of at least one year after the grant is received. Please *do not apply* if the property will be sold or the business will be closed or moved in less than one year.

Properties are not eligible for grants if they have received FIP grant funds in the past seven years. (This

requirement is for projects applying for funds in future years).

As part of the approval process, a Letter of Commitment will be issued by the Program Administrator. Applicants are expected to complete projects in the timeframe outlined in the Letter of Commitment. The City aims to fund as many projects as possible and will not tie up funds with applicants who are not completing their projects. We will hold stringently to the time frame specified in the Letter of Commitment.

For Fiscal Year 2015/16, the program will focus on the commercial areas identified on the attached map. Further areas of focus will be added in subsequent program years.

Eligibility & Processing

- The property must meet the following criteria:
- Be located within Vista city limits.
- Be a retail, commercial, or office use (except for those listed under the section titled “Ineligible for Grants”)
- Proposed project must be in conformance with all applicable City codes and design standards
- Must submit a completed grant application, with all requested collateral materials, to the Program Administrator
- Must be a permitted or conditionally permitted use; legal non-conforming uses are not eligible (example: improvements to a legal non-conforming sign, structure, or a structure housing a non-conforming use will not be eligible)
- Must receive all necessary approvals before any work is started for which grant funds are being requested.
- Must submit original invoices stamped paid or accompanied by copies of cancelled checks, or proof of payment for materials, or for work performed by others before receiving the grant

Grants

All grants are up to 50% matching grants based on eligible improvements and street frontage as previously described.

Properties having a building with multiple businesses/suites qualify for one grant only based on linear frontage (when a single application is submitted). (However, individual business/property owners or tenants of contiguous buildings/suites may apply for separate grants based upon the linear footage of their respective rented or owned building or property. Linear frontage is defined as the length of the physical front of a building – i.e., the façade of a building.)

Applicants owning or doing business on more than one property may apply for additional grants provided the properties are not contiguous to each other. (If an application is received by one owner or business with two adjacent properties, the properties’ application will be treated as a single application and the frontage of the two properties will be aggregated for purposes of determining the

grant amount.)

Work must be completed within a specified time period stated in the Letter of Commitment; if work is not completed in the time frame, the applicant can still receive a grant only if funds are available when they complete the work.

Applicants will not be compensated for labor they perform themselves, only materials used will be eligible and the work must be done in a professional manner.

If the application is not submitted by the property owner, Proof of owner acknowledgement is required as part of the application process.

Design Standards and Requirements

- Applicants requesting grants must propose and complete quality projects; and projects must meet or exceed design standards (where applicable).
- Formulation of color pallets, renderings and building plans will, in most cases, require professional design assistance.
- High quality “before” photos of the property must accompany the application. “After” photos will be required to be submitted with receipts or paid invoices before receiving the grant when the project is complete.

Process

1. Applicant contacts the Program Administrator to arrange a pre-application concept meeting. No drawings or plans are required, but applicant must be able to describe the plan in detail.
2. Upon tentative approval of the project, the Program manager will hold funds within FIP budget. No commitment of grant funds will occur until the Planning Division has determined that the proposed project will meet codes and design standards and Program Administrator notifies applicant with Commitment Letter.
3. The applicant completes and submits application with appropriate permits, cost estimates, and if necessary owner approval of the project.
4. Once the application has been approved, a Letter of Commitment will be sent to the applicant from the Program Administrator. The letter will specify the amount of the estimated grant funds to be set aside and a time frame in which the work must be completed to receive a grant.
5. Applicant can then begin work on the proposed project. The project must be completed by the deadline listed on the Letter of Commitment to receive funds.
6. Upon completion of work on the proposed project, final inspection of the project is performed by the City’s Construction Inspector.
7. If the Construction Inspector deems the work satisfactory, the applicant will receive a check for the grant, in the appropriate amount, within 30 days. Work done, or modifications made that do not conform to the approved project plans, will not receive funds.

Projects Eligible for Grants:

- Significant façade improvements and renovations (see definition at bottom of list).
- Building additions, when the entire building is improved, that is, the addition does not appear to be an add-on but integrates with the building (ex: building addition of compatible architecture and repainting of entire building to match the addition).
- New roof material only if part of a significant façade improvement or renovation and adds a visible improvement.
- Upgraded and uniform façade improvements in older commercial strip centers that enhance the entire center (if the center has more than one individual property ownership, there must be a comprehensive signage plan, color pallet and/or architectural façade plan in place; improvements made must conform to the plans or color pallet).
- Block walls and fencing only if part of a comprehensive landscaping project.
- Signs, awnings and painting of structures if they meet City design requirements.
- Murals, if they are professionally done, provide an important aesthetic improvement and/or improve an expanse of wall or surface prone to graffiti and have the appropriate approvals (Public Art Commission).
- Screening roof-top equipment only in conjunction with other exterior property improvements.
- Creation of outdoor patio areas (removable patio furniture, fixtures or accessories are not eligible).
- Creation of customer entrances from the alley, especially when parking is available in the rear of a building or the alley side is visible from a public street; this must be done in conjunction with a comprehensive façade improvement.
- Other improvements can be considered on a case-by-case basis, but must make a significant improvement to the property appearance and not be one of the excluded improvements listed in the next section.

Definition of Significant Façade Improvements or Renovations

Improvements or renovations of existing buildings, when a combination of several of the following are included: structural façade improvements, paint, awnings, signs, addition of architectural detail to façade, façade tile or stone accents, decorative entry walkway area, outside dining with decorative fencing, outside decorative lighting and new windows.

Ineligible for Grants:

- New buildings.
- Performing general or deferred maintenance on buildings or properties.
- Upgrading mechanical, plumbing, or electrical equipment, or roof repairs.
- Installation of signs or awnings, window replacement, or painting of structures, etc. that are not part of a significant façade improvement or renovation (see definition above).
- Internally illuminated “can” signs or otherwise non-permitted signs.
- Land clearing or tree removal costs.

- Parking area paving, resurfacing, repair or striping.
- Chain link fencing with or without slats.
- City permits or processing fees.
- Residential projects, apartments, day care facilities located in residential neighborhoods.
- Religious facilities (ex: churches) unless they have street frontage in a business area.
- Non-profit facilities unless they have street frontage in a business area.
- Projects that have received grant funds of \$10,000 or more in the past five years (if less than \$10,000 has been received, applicant could be eligible for the difference between their previous grant and the amount they would be eligible for under this program's criteria).

DESIGNATED COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

IN THE CITY OF VISTA

ZONE 1

**EAST VISTA WAY BETWEEN ANZA &
OAK DRIVE**



ZONE 2

**SYCAMORE AVENUE &
SHADOWRIDGE DRIVE**



ZONE 3

**CIVIC CENTER DRIVE & S SANTA FE
(VONS CENTER)**



ZONE 4

**VISTA VILLAGE DRIVE BETWEEN
PLYMOUTH & OLIVE AVENUE**

