

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION
BUILDING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

I. Program Overview

Statement of Purpose:

To improve the blighted appearance of buildings in the downtown area by restoring, renovating, replacing or reconstructing facades and signage.

Funding Mechanism:

A forgivable loan program administered by the City of Fremont and the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District and funded by Community Development Block Grant Downtown Revitalization funds.

Loan Details:

- Available to property owners and business owners / tenants within Fremont Business Improvement District #1
- Maximum funding request is \$50,000. Requires a 25% match (i.e. \$1,000 is \$250 in match and \$750 in loan)
- Request and design must be approved by the City of Fremont
- First application deadline is TBD. If needed, additional cycles will be held as determined by the City of Fremont.

II. Program Guidelines

The purpose of this loan program is to restore, improve or create historic architectural features to facades of commercial buildings anywhere within Fremont's Business Improvement District #1 as identified within the Fremont Downtown Plan.

- A. Where practical, building facades planned for upgrading shall be restored to the original period design. If it is deemed not practical by the Downtown Design Review Committee, a similar architectural design shall be used. All horizontal and vertical features (lintels and piers) shall be retained.
- B. If a building does not have a historic significant architectural design or feature, another proposed design may be submitted to qualify for the program.
- C. All storefronts shall be designed, constructed and maintained to complement and accent the architectural features of the building. All accessories, signs and awnings shall likewise harmonize with the overall character of the building.
- D. All color schemes shall accent the building, as well as harmonize with the historic character of adjacent buildings.
- E. Funds shall be allocated on a competitive basis for a maximum forgivable loan up to 50% of the cost of improvements, not to exceed \$50,000 per project. For the purpose of this program, a property is a parcel as identified by the Dodge County Assessor's office with a unique parcel number.

- F. Funds shall be scored by the Downtown Design Review Committee as follows:
- Building Preservation – 50 points
 - Historic Restoration – 25 points
Maximum points may be awarded if plan includes pre-approval from the Nebraska State Historic Preservation and architectural plans.
 - Project Readiness – 25 points
 - Visual Impact in the Downtown District – 40 points
- G. No work for which funding is sought should begin until authorized by the Fremont City Council and the applicant has received a signed and dated Notice to Proceed from Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District.
- H. No program monies shall be used to perform general repair, structural or habitable work or otherwise to meet the code to occupy the building.
- I. Painting is eligible for exterior façade improvements in combination with window replacement or facade restoration for bricks, stucco, and exterior surfaces for historic preservation that constrains deterioration of the exterior façade. Painting for the purpose of changing colors (interior or exterior) is not considered restoration and is ineligible as it is considered maintenance.
- J. Other eligible painting that may be considered restoration:
- a. Painting of permanent signage (fixed to a structure) for restoration and historic preservation.
 - b. Restoration and improvements for public safety and related to the structural integrity may include painting as a last or near last step in the restoration process. Without qualifying as restoration and/or combined with other activities that contribute to restoration/rehabilitation/preservation, painting is treated as maintenance. CDBG funds may not be used for maintenance.
- K. To qualify for forgivable loan funds, an application with appropriate conceptual plans and other documents must be submitted to the City of Fremont, Attention Grant Coordinator for review and recommendation by the Downtown Design Review Committee with final approval by the Fremont City Council.
- L. The work proposed by the applicant requires at least two bids from outside sources to verify that costs are within reasonable parameters.
- M. Contractors are required to comply with Davis-Bacon Wage Determinations and E-Verify requirements (contact Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District for additional information). Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District requires a copy of all contracts and must attend a pre-construction conference prior to contractor starting work.
- N. Contractors must secure all required building and construction related permits from the City of Fremont and will be expected to complete the project in accordance with the approved plans, all applicable codes and ordinances, and standard building practices.

- O. A contract must be signed with a contractor within 60 days of notification of award, and the project must be completed within six (6) months from date of project approval.
- P. Attestation of U.S. Citizenship form is required if applying as an individual.
- Q. Projects are subject to Tier II environmental review and approval from the State Historical Preservation Office.
- R. Improved facades and signage must remain intact on building for a minimum period of five years from date of completion. Changes to improved facades and signage prior to five years may trigger repayment of loan, as specified in contract with the City. (do we need to include info about changes in ownership?)

III. Design Guidelines

For the benefit of the entire Fremont community, the Façade and Building Improvement Program encourages the improvement of facades and signage in the historic downtown district, so as to accentuate the historic elements of the district through restoration, renovation, replacement or reconstruction of facades, as defined:

Façade shall mean the front (and side if located on a corner) exterior wall of a building exposed to public view from the building's exterior. This will typically include a visual impact with items such as awnings, windows and signage. Exceptions may be made for businesses with sole entrance access located in an area other than the front.

Restoration is the preferred treatment for building façades and improvement. Restoration is most applicable to buildings where there has been very little change to the building façade over time. This results in the return of the façade to its original appearance through the use of authentic materials and the replication of missing or deteriorated components.

Renovation results in façade improvements which do not attempt to return the building to its original appearance. Improvements made should be sensitive to historic details and materials and should respect whatever original character remains.

Replacement of facades is appropriate when the majority of the original façade is missing or has been significantly altered so as to make restoration or renovation impractical. Façade designs should select materials, dimensions and architectural details that are similar or compatible to surrounding buildings. Examples: façade height, window size and spacing, materials and colors.

Reconstruction takes place when the building and its features no longer exist. With reconstruction, façade designs are created through new construction to replicate, mimic, resemble or accentuate historic period details.

Structural Improvements will be considered to be the sides of the buildings not visible to the street along with the roof.

This program encourages the following specific design guidelines for facade and signage improvements in Downtown Fremont:

- Contemporary design alterations should not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material.
- Distinguishing original qualities and character should be retained.
- Historic material and distinctive architectural features should be retained.
- Skilled craftsmanship that characterizes the building should be retained.
- Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, new materials should match as closely as possible in design, color, texture and other visual qualities.
- Building surface cleaning should be completed using the gentlest means possible. Exterior sandblasting or methods that will damage historic building materials should be avoided.
- Alterations to facades should be done in a manner that if the alterations were to be removed in the future, the integrity of the structure and subsurface would be unimpaired.
- Non-original building siding such as stucco, vinyl and aluminum should be removed whenever possible.
- Replacement glass should be similar in size, color and reflectivity to the original.
- Dark-tinted glass should not be used.
- Original historically significant facades should be restored with as little physical alteration as possible.
- The use of incompatible materials for reconstruction should be discouraged, such as aluminum or steel siding, faux brick, asphalt or cedar shingles, plastic, fiberglass and stucco.
- Storefronts should incorporate the three design elements of a traditional storefront to retain the integrity of the streetscape, such as bulkhead, storefront windows and transom windows.
- Signage should accentuate the period architecture and shall comply with local signage code ordinances.

IV. Design and Document Approval Flow Chart

1. Application is filled out and submitted to the Grant Coordinator (angie.olson@fremontne.gov) at the City of Fremont, 400 E. Military 2nd floor, along with a preliminary conceptual sketch of the planned improvements. (There is no need to provide information from “Supporting Data Checklist” with this initial application).
2. The City of Fremont will contact Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District for Tier II environmental review on approved applications. Please allow 60-90 days for approval and environmental clearance.
3. A meeting of the Downtown Design Review Committee to score the application regarding the proposed improvements is scheduled. Committee members meet to discuss the applicant’s ideas and needs.

Note: Sketches of the planned improvements need only be conceptual but must show enough detail so the Downtown Design Review Committee can make comments and recommendations.

4. If the applicant wishes to participate in the program, applicant arranges for preparation of construction drawings and price quotation and provides a copy to Downtown Design Review

Committee for review. If no changes are suggested, the applicant completes the application material outlined under “Supporting Data Checklist” and submits two copies to the City of Fremont Grant Coordinator.

5. The Downtown Design Review Committee and Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District reviews the formal application, makes a recommendation to the City Council, and communicates formal approval/denial to the applicant.
6. Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District meets with approved applicants and contractors to review and complete paperwork and legal documents.
7. Upon receipt of Notice to Proceed, signed and dated by Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District, the project is undertaken according to approved design. Any changes must be approved by the Downtown Design Review Committee, City of Fremont Permits and Inspection Department and Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District.
 - The applicant must ensure the selected contractor is aware of Davis Bacon Wage Requirements prior to final selection of the contractor.
 - The Contractor must work with Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District.
 - The applicant will pay Contractor invoices and submit proof of payment of all invoices to the City of Fremont Grant Coordinator for reimbursement.
8. At project completion, the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District conducts a final review and provides an Acceptance of Project Completion report to the City of Fremont indicating that the project has been completed as proposed and final inspections have been approved.
9. Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District prepares loan drawdown documents and submits to the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.
10. The City of Fremont disburses loan funds upon receipt from Nebraska Department of Economic Development.
11. The Downtown Design Review Committee reviews façade and building improvements annually for a period of five (5) years to ensure that approved designs remain intact.

V. Supporting Data Checklist

The following information shall be submitted once the application is approved:

Façade and Structure improvements:

- Provide a rendering of changes, including paint and awning colors where applicable
- Submit two (2) detailed written estimates from contractor and subcontractors
- Submit color photo of existing structure

Signs:

- Provide a color rendering of the design chosen
- Include specifications as to the size and width of the sign
- Note how and where the sign will be hung on the building

- Submit two (2) written estimates from a sign company or qualified contractor
 - Submit written verification that design and size comply with city codes
- Note: Awning design must take into account the architectural style of the building*

Paint:

- Provide samples of the colors chosen
- Mark which color will be the body color and which will be accent colors
- Note where each color will be used
- Submit two (2) written estimates from painter of your choice

Awnings:

- Provide information about color and style of awning chosen
 - Note where awning will be placed on building
 - Submit two (2) detailed written estimates from qualified contractor
 - Submit written verification that design and size comply with city codes
- Note: Awning design must take into account the architectural style of the building*

Windows:

- Provide details on windows being replaced
- Provide a copy of a recent energy audit, if available

Documents:

- Submit signed Hold Harmless Agreement (see attachment)
- If applying as an individual, submit signed Attestation of U.S. Citizenship (see attached)
- Submit a copy of approved building permit
- If applying as a business owner, provide a written authorization from the property owner for the improvements

Façade and Building Improvement Program Application Form

Applicant Name: _____

Applicant's Phone Number: _____

Applicant's email address: _____

Business Name: _____

Business Owner: _____

Property Owner: _____

Property Address: _____

Property Legal Description: _____

Type of façade improvement planned (see Design Guidelines):

Restoration Renovation Replacement Reconstruction

Type of Signage improvement planned:

Removal New Alteration Repair

Structural alterations: _____

Cosmetic alterations (i.e. moldings): _____

Painting (approximate sq. ft. area): _____

Other work – specify (i.e. awnings): _____

Total cost of project: _____

Amount requested (up to 75% of project cost – not to exceed \$50,000) \$ _____

I hereby submit the attached plans, specifications and color samples for the proposed project, and understand that these must be approved by the City of Fremont. No work may begin until I have received a signed and dated Notice to Proceed from Northeast Nebraska Economic Development

District. I further understand that there must be a signed contract with a contractor within 60 days of notification of award, and the project must be completed within six (6) months from date of project approval. If the City has not received correspondence in that time frame, the funds will be reallocated. Loan funds will not be paid until Northeast Nebraska Development District provides the City of Fremont with an Acceptance of Project Completion and the city receives drawn down funds from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. I agree to leave the completed project in its approved design and colors for a period of five (5) years from the date of completion. If changed before the end of five years, I agree to pay back the loan amount. I understand that a Deed of Trust, in the amount equal to the loan amount, will be placed upon the property at the time the applicant signs the promissory note. This lien, in favor of the City of Fremont, will take a subordinate position to all existing liens. Is a title search required to make sure of our lien position?

Signature of Property Owner

Signature of Business Owner/Tenant
(if applicable)

Printed Name & Title of Property Owner

Printed Name & Title of Business Owner

Date

Date

Release and Hold Harmless Agreement

Release executed on the _____ day of _____, _____, by (Property Owner) _____ and (Business owner if applicable _____, of (Street Address) _____, City of Fremont, County of Dodge, State of Nebraska, referred to as Releaser(s).

In consideration of being granted monies for restoration, modifications, signage, or other physical changes to the property located at the above address, the Releaser(s), understands that they are solely responsible for providing their own contractors, and to assure that those contractors are fully insured and licensed and have obtained all necessary permits in accordance with all pertinent regulations. The Releaser(s) waives, releases, discharges, and covenants not to sue or interplead and agrees to indemnify the City of Fremont (or entities under the City's umbrella), the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District for loss or damage, and claims or damages therefore, on account of any work that has been performed in accordance with City or State guidelines or related to the Downtown Revitalization Building Improvement Program.

Releaser(s) agrees that this release, waiver, and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of Nebraska and that if any portion of the agreement is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall; notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

Releaser(s) further states that it has carefully read the above release and knows the contents of the release and signs this release as its own free act.

Releaser's obligation and duties hereunder shall in no manner be limited or restricted by the maintaining of any insurance coverage related to the above referenced event.

This release contains the entire agreement between the parties to this agreement and the terms of this release are contractual and not a mere recital.

Signature of Property Owner

Signature of Business Owner (if applicable)

Printed Name & Title of Property Owner

Printed Name & Title of Business Owner

Date:

Date:

United States Citizenship Attestation Form

For the purpose of complying with Neb. Rev. Stat. §§4-108 through 4-114, I attest as follows:

____ I am a citizen of the United States.

--OR--

____ I am a qualified alien under the Federal Immigration and Nationality Act, my immigration status and alien number are as follows: _____, and I agree to provide a copy of my USCIS documentation upon request.

I hereby attest that my response and the information provided on this form and any related application for public benefits are true, complete and accurate and I understand that this information may be used to verify my lawful presence in the United States.

Printed Name: _____
 First Middle Last

Signature: _____

Date: _____