



# **Commercial Building & Site Grant Program**

## Introduction

The Commercial Building & Site Grant Program has been established to stimulate commercial exterior building and site improvements within the context of the downtown as administered by the Community Development Authority (CDA).

The Façade Grant Program is relatively the same as the Façade Loan Program but is focused towards smaller scaled projects (Ex. new signage, parking lot updates, general structure updates, landscaping, etc.). Businesses that meet the eligibility requirements outlined below can receive matching grants up to \$3,000.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Commercial Building & Site Grant Program is to provide matching grants to existing commercial buildings and sites for preservation and restoration. Further, the program is instituted to encourage urban design excellence, integrate urban design and preservation of Muskego's heritage into the process of downtown redevelopment, and enhance the character of the downtown area. Grant resources should produce visible changes to commercial buildings and commercial sites. Since funding sources are limited, priority will be given to projects demonstrating the most substantial impact on building and neighborhood aesthetics.

## Target Area

The Façade Grant Program is available to all Downtown Muskego businesses within Redevelopment Districts No. 1 and 2 (please refer to attached map). The Redevelopment Districts No. 1 and 2 areas have been found and declared a blighted area and specific properties within the RD No. 1 and 2 Plan boundaries are specifically discussed as such in the Plan.

## Eligibility

### A. *Buildings & Sites*

Funds must be used for rehabilitation of existing commercial buildings or for site modernizing within the designated target area. All properties must be conforming uses or legal nonconforming uses under the City's zoning ordinance. Properties will not be eligible if any special assessments, real estate taxes or personal property taxes are delinquent. Only one grant per property will be allowed each year (with year begins on the date of an approval by Council). Buildings with multiple tenants must be remodeled in a unified manner.

### B. *Eligible Applicants*

Owners, tenants, or owner/tenant joint ventures may submit applications under this program. Tenants must submit written approval of the property owner, evidence of their leasehold interest and must comply with requirements and standards as deemed necessary by the CDA.

Applicants shall not be disqualified based on age, race, religion, color, handicap, sex, physical condition, development disability as defined in s.51.01(5), sexual orientation, or national origin.

### C. *Ineligible Applicants*

No member of the CDA, the Common Council, or any other official, employee, or agent of the City who exercises decision-making functions or responsibilities in connection with the implementation of the program is eligible for financial assistance under this program. In addition, no loans shall be made which are in conflict with Section 946.13 of the Wisconsin Statutes (Private Interest in Public Contract Prohibited).

Loans shall not be available for the following businesses:

- Speculative investment companies;
- Real estate investment companies;
- Lending institutions;
- Gambling operations;
- Non-public recreation facilities; or
- Businesses not serving the interests of the City.

D. *Eligible Activities*

Eligible activities shall include but are not limited to the following:

Buildings

- A. Design improvements made to front, rear or side building elevations, (priority will be given to front facades) including the following:
  - Modernizing of overall building materials and structure
  - Addition of new building materials
  - Adaptation of new and innovative architectural elements to a structure
  - Re-Painting
- B. Design fees on completed projects.

Sites

- A. New road signs (Must be “monument” signage only to qualify)
- B. Updated and/or additional landscaping and lighting
- C. Screening devices for outdoor storage or refuse containers
- D. Parking Lot redesign or updates

E. *Ineligible Activities*

The following are not eligible for inclusion in this program:

- A. Roof repairs.
- B. Construction of new buildings.
- C. Structural additions to existing buildings.
- D. Purchase of property and/or buildings.
- E. Equipment.
- F. Interior fixtures & furnishings.
- G. Inventory or operating capital.

Program Funding

The program allows a matching grant. All grant funds are administered by the CDA and allocated by the Muskego Common Council. The grant runs on first come, first serve basis. Buildings/Sites shall be eligible for grant funding only once per calendar year. Façade Grant funds shall be allocated to specific projects based on the following formula:

50% matching grant up to \$3,000

Funds are available up to the amount budgeted by the Common Council on a yearly basis and this program does not guarantee that monies will be in the program at all times.

*NOTE: While the grant amount stated above has a maximum of \$3,000 allowed, actual amounts approved are subject to change by the approval of the CDA and Common Council on a case-by-case basis. Examples of allowing more than the stated maximum amount may include projects that demonstrate a benefit to the community and the surrounding area, projects that may set the tone for an area, projects that may be a catalyst for other redevelopments/developments in the area, and/or projects providing a considerable percentage match above the needed minimum of 50%.*

*Applicants seeking more than the maximum funding allowed must state in their applications which of the above criteria is fulfilled and their reasoning. Additional justification requesting funds surpassing the maximum may also be submitted. Providing justification does not guarantee approval.*

#### Design Standards

All applicants shall utilize Muskego Downtown Design Guidelines, Muskego General Design Guidelines, and Redevelopment District No. 1 or 2 Plan concepts as a guide for designing improvements to buildings and sites. The documents can be found at the City of Muskego website or copies can be attained in the Muskego Community Development Department.

#### Application Process

- A. Applicant obtains application and design standards from the Muskego Community Development Department to develop ideas for improvements.
- B. Applicant may meet with Community Development Department staff to go over improvement ideas.
- C. Based upon a concept, the applicant obtains preliminary cost estimates from a contractor selected by the applicant.
- D. Applicant completes an application, which includes design plans, cost estimates and construction schedules. At least two (2) bids should be submitted for each project and it is recommended that at least one bid is from a local Muskego contractor (if found). The completed application is submitted to the Muskego Community Development Department for review and then forwarded to the CDA, at their next available meeting, for determination. The CDA meets on a monthly basis. The CDA may consider past approval of loans or grants for the property.
- E. If the application is recommended for approval by the CDA, the Common Council must then act upon the grant submittal. A resolution of the Common Council, outlining the commitments required by the applicant before issuance of any grants, must be approved at the next available Common Council meeting. If the application is not approved by the CDA, the board will explain the reasons for rejection, and what, if any, steps can be taken to gain approval.
- F. Applications, depending on the amount of changes made to an existing commercial buildings or sites, may need to be reviewed by other authorities before final approval including the Planning Commission. Substantial change determinations are solely made by the City's Community Development Director.
- G. Projects that commence prior to approval by the CDA do so at their own risk but may be eligible for a grant if the proposal follows the Downtown Design Guidelines, General Design Guidelines, Redevelopment District No. 1 or 2 Plan concepts, and is for an eligible activity, as determined by the CDA. In such cases, the CDA will review the application at the next regular meeting following the filing of the application and make the necessary determinations. In no case shall a grant be approved for a project that was completed or started more than six months after the date of application submittal. Preference will be given to those applying for first time grants and those grant proposals that haven't commenced construction before grant approvals. Actual paid invoices must accompany grant proposals that were already completed.

#### Post Application Procedure

The Common Council resolution will outline the responsibilities of the applicant, however, the basic procedures will apply:

- A. Projects must be completed within 12 months of Common Council approval or the grant shall become void.
- B. Changes in the approved work, that affect the monetary value of the grant issued, must be approved by the CDA and possibly other City boards (The City's Planning Commission if change is deemed substantial to what was originally approved).
- C. Approved changes in work verifications will be attached to the original applications dated and signed by the City's Community Development Department.
- D. The applicant and Community Development Department staff will review proof of payment (paid invoices) and completed work before the grant payment will be made to the applicant.
- E. Deviations from an approved plan may disqualify the applicant from this program.