



City of
Riverbank
CALIFORNIA

City of Riverbank Downtown Façade Improvement Program

Funded by: American Rescue Plan Act



Façade Improvement Program Overview

The Riverbank Façade Improvement Program (FIP) is a reimbursement grant program provided to a business and/or property owner for the improvement of existing buildings in the Riverbank Downtown Specific Plan designated area. The program was created to encourage private investment by enhancing the physical “curb appeal” and increase economic vitality within the Downtown Specific Plan Area in Riverbank. The program encourages retention of existing businesses, attract new businesses, and increase property values. The long-term objective goal of the program is to permanently improve the appearance of Riverbank’s Downtown.

The program provides a matching grant of dollar for dollar of the façade improvement costs to the business and/or owner up to a maximum of \$15,000.

The Program

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 must be equal to or greater than the grant funds awarded.

This program is intended for commercial property ownerships and business owners who have long-term leases with five or more years. Long-term tenants may apply with property owner as co-applicant. The application must be signed by the property owner. Businesses have to be sales tax generators for the City in order to apply.

The Program features open enrollment; applications shall be considered on a first-come, first-served basis until the program window for accepting applications closes. Completed applications within the deadline will be reviewed and approved by Administration Department. The Program has two options, A & B and an architect design service reimbursement for option A only.

The Administration Department will administer the grant program (Program Administrator). The Planning and Building Division of the Development Services 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.

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.

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 by the City’s Construction Inspector to confirm the work has been completed and conforms to the approved plans, colors and/or materials.

Eligibility and Processing

The property must meet the following criteria:

- Be located within the Riverbank Downtown Specific Plan Area.
- Be a retail, commercial, or office use.
- Must be a permitted or conditionally permitted (via an approved Conditional Use Permit) 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).
- The proposed project must be in conformance with all applicable City codes and design standards, including the Downtown Specific Plan Architectural Guidelines.
- Must submit a completed grant application to the Program Administrator.
- Must receive all necessary approvals before any work is started for which grant funds are being requested.
- Must submit original invoices stamped paid and accompanied by copies of cancelled checks, or proof of payment for materials, or for work performed by others before receiving reimbursement.

Improvements must comply with all City building codes, permitting, and sign standards. Application must be submitted, approved, and permitted, prior to the start of the construction.

Applicants must be in good standing and have NO active violations with any State, Local, & City agencies. Applicants for this program are not exempt from any planning, building or other City department permit fees.

Design Standards and Review

Design review is required for exterior alterations and must be in conformance with the Downtown Specific Plan Architectural Guidelines.

Applicants requesting grants must propose and complete quality projects; and projects must meet or exceed design standards (where applicable).

Formulation of color palettes, 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.

“Riverbank’s strong sense of community identity is reflected in its public gathering spaces and activities, architectural variety, and the ways in which the City’s riverfront location, railroad-oriented history, agricultural heritage, and other unique qualities are celebrated in the built environment.”

Riverbank 2025 Vision

Grants

All grants dollar for dollar matching grants, with a maximum of \$15,000, based on eligible improvements.

The funding for this program is based on receipts of the actual improvement and then reimbursed to the applicant. The program is for eligible improvement projects made to the first floor or street level of a commercial building/unit/suite(s). Residential or multi-unit residential buildings are NOT eligible. Grant funds will be made on a first-come, first-served basis until the budgeted funds are committed and the program window for accepting applications closes. Projects must be completed within 6 months of grant approval. If the project extends beyond the scheduled completion date, an extension maybe requested with staff approval required. If, after an approved extension, work is not completed in the time frame the applicant can still receive a grant only if funds are available. The program distributes reimbursement payment to applicant/s after City deems the project complete, and upon the submission of invoices and proof of payment.

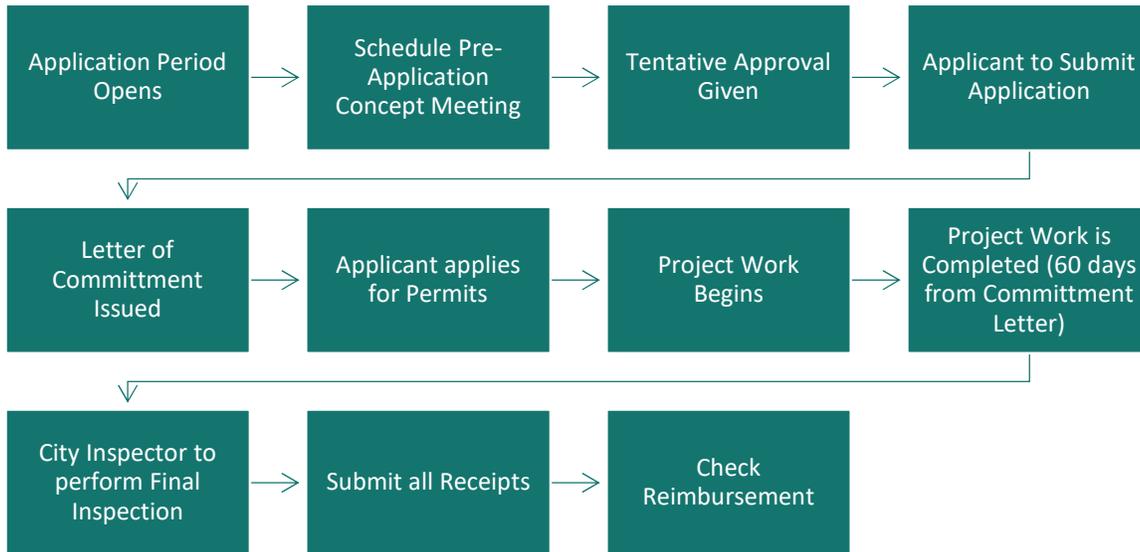
Applicants will not be compensated for labor they perform themselves, only materials used will be eligible and the work must be done in a professional manner.

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

Application 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 the Program Administrator notifies applicant with Commitment Letter.
3. The applicant completes and submits the 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.

Application Workflow



Pre-Application Concept Meeting Requirements

Applicants will meet with the Program Administrator, representatives from Planning & Building Divisions to review the project & building permit process and to answer any questions that a business may have. Program Administrator will review the application process with the business owner, discuss the scope of work, determine a timeline, and review the remaining process for the grant.

➤ **Planning Approvals or Permits**

If any Planning Approvals or permits are required, the applicant is responsible for submitting project plans through the Planning Division for Architectural and Site Plan Review.

➤ **Building Permit Approval**

If a building permit is required, the applicant is responsible for submitting plans that meet all code requirements through the Building Division for Plan Check and Building Permit issuance.

“The City of Riverbank is a regional leader in sustainable development offering a unique, culturally diverse, safe, and welcoming community with a thriving downtown, recreational opportunities for all ages and sustainable economy that supports our growing population.”

City of Riverbank Strategic Plan Vision

Projects Eligible for Grants

Improvements for the Program include, but are not limited to:

Eligible Improvements	Ineligible Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exterior Paint • Repair or replacement of exterior siding • Installation of entry doors • Installation of display windows • Installation of new awnings/canopies over windows and entryway • Installation of new signs or upgraded signage • Installation of exterior lighting • Permanent landscaping • Construction of outdoor dining or gathering spaces • Removal of old signs, awnings, and other exterior clutter • New concept murals, if professionally done and approved by the City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obscure windows that do not allow or encourage viewing into the business • Overpowering signs • Alcoves or recesses on exterior building walls • Loading docks, parking entrances and exits • Interior improvements or roof repair, not visible from the street • Removal of architecturally important features • Installation of plastic or vinyl awnings and canopies • Installation of heavy, unattractive, roll-down security grates • Previous unauthorized improvements • Performing deferred maintenance on building or property • Parking area paving, resurfacing, or striping • City permits or processing fees

Additional improvements will be reviewed and approved/denied based on the Downtown Specific Plan Architectural guidelines.

Downtown Specific Plan Guidelines

The Downtown Specific Plan adopted by the Riverbank City Council provides the standards and guidelines to guide the look and feel of new and rehabilitated buildings throughout the Downtown Specific Plan Area. The information contained in Section 2.3.1 *Architecture* is provided to ensure that new architecture fulfills the community’s vision for built forms that are attractive, while preserving the existing neighborhoods and enhancing the city’s small-town character. A copy of the Final Downtown Specific Plan document can be located at [Final-DTSP---May-12-2015 \(riverbank.org\)](#).

Who To Call

For additional questions regarding the Façade Improvement program, please contact the Administration Department at (209) 863-7122.

Ownership/Tenant Commitment

Property or business ownership 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.