



Downtown Façade Improvement Program Overview Round 2

Overview & Purpose

In 2016 the City implemented a pilot Façade Improvement Program to help encourage private reinvestment in buildings within the historic downtown. The initial program set aside \$50,000 in matching funds for building owners and business owners who made qualified property improvements. The pilot program lasted until 2018.

In 2021, the City intends to open Round 2 of the Façade Improvement Program and will set aside \$50,000 in matching funds for private building improvements in downtown. Round 2 will focus on providing reimbursement for structural, design and visual improvements to the **rear frontages** of buildings that have a secondary entrance directly to a public or private lot. Such improvements are intended to:

- Improve public safety by creating safe and attractive building frontages with direct access to public parking lots;
- Promote further economic development in downtown;
- Complement public improvements that have or will be made in the downtown core;
- Encourage large buildings with double frontages to be further divided to create additional opportunities for new businesses; and
- Enhance pedestrian experiences in downtown.

Round 2 of the Façade Improvement Program will be operated on behalf of the City by Main Street Wadsworth. More information can be found below in the section: ***Façade Improvement Process – How it Works.***

Why Should I Participate?

With only a small investment, you can greatly enhance your building. Facade improvements can:

- Add value to your business or building;
- Create opportunities to expand existing businesses or create new ones;
- Improve pedestrian security and accessibility; and
- Enhance the customer experience.

Eligibility

In general, those properties eligible to participate in Round 2 of the program must be located in the Historic Main Street Wadsworth Overlay District and have frontage on both a public street and a public parking lot.

The boundaries of the participation area are:

- Northern Boundary – King Street/Maple Street
- East Boundary – North and South Lyman Street
- West Boundary – North and South Pardee Street
- South Boundary – Mills Street/Wright Drive (private)

In order to participate, applicants may not have outstanding debts to the City, unpaid property taxes or unresolved code enforcement issues.

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Eligible Activities

Activities and improvements to the rear frontages that are eligible for reimbursement include:

- Creation of new storefront entrances from parking lots;
- Restoration or makeover of existing rear frontage entrances;
- Creation or enhancement of outdoor parking, dining, seating and gathering areas;
- Replacement/repair of doors and windows;
- Painting, cleaning and tuck point repairs;
- New signage and permanent window/door graphics, canopies, awnings and exterior building lighting;
- Repair and replacement of gutters, downspouts, cornices, and other decorative and functional elements of the building;
- Repairs and improvements to address deficiencies to the structure and/or mechanical systems, such as roofing, electrical panel and system upgrades; water and sanitary line improvements; footer repairs and similar activities or to re-route such features in order to in order to create functional access to the building.

All eligible improvements funded through this program shall be consistent with the Main Street Wadsworth Historic Design Guidelines and approved by the City of Wadsworth's Architectural Design Committee in accordance with Codified Ordinances §§154.071 and 154.482.

Ineligible Activities

The following activities and improvements are not eligible for reimbursement by the Program:

- Improvements to or within the public right-of-way and street furniture;
- Temporary improvements;
- Improvements to single-family residential buildings;
- Out-of-pocket expenses (i.e., project soft costs) for design, permits, and construction;
- Costs for owner-completed work (all repairs and improvements made under this program shall be completed by professional contractors).

Maximum Financial Assistance

The City will reimburse the applicant 50% of the cost of the eligible improvements, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per project. A request for reimbursement may only be made upon completion of the project and after the contractor(s) has/have been paid in full and all grant paperwork and payment documentation (invoices; canceled checks, etc.) have been provided to Main Street Wadsworth.

Assistance will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis until all funds are expended.

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Façade Improvement Program Process – How It Works

As noted above, Main Street Wadsworth, Inc. (MSW) will administer and manage this program on behalf of the City. The application for funding assistance will be available on both the City and MSW websites.

- ❖ Completed applications shall be submitted to MSW where they will be reviewed by a special committee established for the purpose of assuring that the proposed work complies with the intent of the Historic District Design Guidelines and intent of this program. MSW will be responsible for establishing dates and times of their applications review meetings and informing applicants of these.
- ❖ MSW may approve, disapprove or recommend design changes to the proposed work. Once an application has been approved for funding, the applicant shall submit their proposal, along with evidence of MSW's funding approval, to the City's Architectural Design Committee. A schedule of the regular ADC meetings is maintained by the City of Wadsworth and can be downloaded from the City's website: <https://www.wadsworthcity.com/858/Design-Review>.
- ❖ ***No work may start on the building until AFTER the application has been approved by MSW and the Architectural Design Committee.*** Any work that has been started before an application has been approved is ineligible for reimbursement.
- ❖ Once the funding application has been approved by MSW and the project design has been approved by the ADC, the applicant may proceed with the actual work. It will be the applicant's responsibility to hire contractors and ensure that:
 - appropriate permits required by the project have been obtained;
 - all applicable federal, state and local laws have been complied with; and
 - all work has been completed with the contractor and all subcontractors paid in full.

All projects shall be completed within 180 days of MSW's funding approval, unless an extension has been requested and granted.

- ❖ Upon completion of the work and after full payment has been made to the contractor(s), the applicant shall then submit evidence to MSW verifying that the work has been fully completed and that the contractor(s) has/have been paid in order to receive reimbursement. Evidence of completion and payment may consist of (but is not limited to): "before and after" photos of the project; copies of all contracts, contractor invoices; payment vouchers, canceled checks, etc. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 180 days of MSW's approval, unless an extension is requested and granted by MSW.
- ❖ Once MSW is satisfied that the project has been completed as approved, they will request that the City issue a reimbursement check to the applicant.

Contact Information & Links

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