



City of Rocky Mount Administrative Policy

Policy: Downtown Building Assistance Program

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| Section: | Administrative | Policy No. II.33 |
| Prepared By: | Tasha Logan, Assistant City Manager | |
| Approved By: | City Council | |
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SECTION 1. Purpose

This program is designed to foster an attractive environment for new business and job creation in the Central City Business District by making funds available to match private investment in exterior and interior building improvements that serve to make buildings in this area available for business utilization. The Central City Business District has been identified as a prime redevelopment area of the City that the City Council has targeted for revitalization.

SECTION 2. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to carry out the objectives of the Downtown Building Assistance Grant, the Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP) shall serve as an advisory panel to the program.

2.1 The duties will be as follows:

- a. The CCRP will develop and recommend guidelines for the financial incentives connected with the Downtown Building Assistance Grant.
- b. The CCRP shall serve as an appeal board for applicants who wish to appeal an application denial or make a complaint regarding the process or treatment.

- 2.2 The program will be administered by the following City staff members:
- a. The Downtown Development Manager will serve as primary contact for questions, concerns, application intake and program promotion.
 - b. The Downtown Development Manager will review and prepare recommendations for award of assistance grants for approval by the Assistant City Manager.
 - c. The Downtown Development Manager will facilitate grant compliance with awarded recipients, including review of documentation for projects completed and processing of award payments.
 - d. The Department of Planning and Inspections insure compliance with Building Code and Historic Preservation guidelines.

SECTION 3. Downtown Building Assistance Program Guidelines

- 3.1 The commercial property must be located within the boundaries of the Downtown Overlay District (Core or Transitional) (see attached map). Generally speaking, the District is the area created by the connected boundaries of Grand Avenue (North), Grace Street (West), Raleigh Road (South) and Atlantic Ave, Lexington and Canal (East).
- 3.2 Types of projects which may be funded include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Brick or wall surface cleaning
 - b. Patching and painting of façade walls
 - c. Signage or lighting replacement/repair
 - d. Canopy, porch, awning installation/repair
 - e. Window and/or door replacement/repair
 - f. Mortar joint repair
 - g. Railings and ironwork repair or addition
 - h. Cornice repair and/or replacement
 - i. Replacement/repair to exterior steps
 - j. Roof repair and replacement
 - k. Interior repairs and improvements, such as but not limited to electrical, plumbing, HVAC, windows, insulation, ceilings, flooring and painting.
 - l. Purchase and installation of fixtures, equipment, furniture or other items tied to the upfit of space for active commercial use.

- 3.3 Plans for improvements must conform to existing building and landscape regulations of the City of Rocky Mount, and the Rocky Mount Historic Preservation Commission Design Guidelines. All projects must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness or approval of the Historic Planner prior to the funding approval. Exterior painting may not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. However, approval by the Historic Preservation Planner regarding appropriateness of exterior paint color or stains is required for the receipt of funds from this grant program.
- 3.4 To be eligible for funding from the grant, the building must qualify for a Certificate of Occupancy at time of application or at the completion of the project. (In other words, the grant may not be used for improvements to a building which may not be occupied due to code violations or issues.)
- 3.5 Every assisted dwelling unit must be free from any Demolition by Neglect violations and conform to the City of Rocky Mount building code standards for the intended use, if known at the time of application.
- 3.6 In order to receive funding, the application must show that upon completion of scheduled improvements, and in order to receive award funds, the property must at a minimum receive a certificate of compliance per the North Carolina Administrative Code GS160A-423 and the following:
 - a. Must have usable electrical service per National Electrical Code (NEC) standards
 - b. At least one ADA-compliant bathroom, unless a bathroom already exists and is eligible to be grandfathered
 - c. Working HVAC
 - d. Roof free of leaks
 - e. Floors and stairs free of hazards and meeting safety requirements (no holes and railing as required)
 - f. Air tight windows

When inspecting each unit, the City's Building Code Inspector will employ these standards and, if necessary, prepare a list of repairs that must be performed in order to fulfill this requirement.

- 3.7 Funding Formula: Subject to the availability of funding, incentives will be awarded on an 50/50 matching basis with a maximum grant award being \$20,000 per parcel. Any work done prior to the approval of a grant application is not eligible for funding.
- 3.8 Funding Eligibility Exclusions
- a. Religious organizations for sectarian purposes
 - b. Individual K-12 schools (public or private)
 - c. Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion
 - d. Political activities
 - e. Non-conforming uses
- 3.7. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, the recipient must acquire all permits necessary and applicable for the work proposed in their application.
- 3.8. Reimbursement or payment will only be made for materials and labor not performed by the owner. There will be no reimbursement or payment for labor performed by the owner. However, labor performed by the owner may be credited as match for the grant provided that the labor can be verified, the labor is applicable to the project approved for funding and the labor rate is reasonably in-line with market rates.
- 3.9. No property shall be eligible for more than one (1) grant award in any given five (5) year period.
- 3.10. Upon award, the recipient must acknowledge that any and all improvements funded in part with grant award funds must remain with the property, including upon conveyance to another owner if the property is sold.

SECTION 4. Application Process for Financial Incentives

- 4.1 All applicants must:
- a. Be the legal owner of the property or have the permission of the legal owner (notarized statement from the owner and/or a copy of deed to the property)
 - b. Furnish a current list of owners/partners and staff (or in the case of a non-profit entity, the board of directors)
 - c. Be financially stable
 - d. Be current with city and county property taxes and/or utilities

- e. Provide and maintain current property insurance to cover the value of the structure and all improvements
 - f. Renderings and architectural plans of the entire project.
- 4.2 The application and supporting material will be collected and reviewed by the Downtown Manager and then forwarded to the Department of Planning and Community Development for further review.
- 4.3 The Planning and Development Department will review the application and prepare a recommendation on its approval or disapproval, along with any supportive documentation, to the Downtown Development Manager, who will issue a recommendation for approval or disapproval to the Assistant City Manager.
- 4.4 The Assistant City Manager will review the report and recommendation and provide formal approval or disapproval of the application.
- 4.5 Two funding options are available:
- a. Reimbursement upon completion and approval of the renovations. Paid receipts, canceled checks, paid invoices, or other proof of expenditures must be submitted within thirty working days of the completion of the project; or
 - b. Direct payment to contractor upon completion and approval of the work by the City. Contractor must possess current business and professional licenses.

All work must be completed within six months of the award of the grant.

- 4.6 Upon satisfactory completion of all work required, the Downtown Development Manager, Historic Planner and Inspection Services staff inspects work and approves final payment. If the site inspection is not satisfactory, the applicant will be notified and allowed up to thirty working days for correction of unsatisfactory items.

Section 5: Appeal Process

Persons applying for the Downtown Building Assistance Program will have seven (7) business days to appeal the denial decision of the staff to the CCRP. Notice of the appeal must be submitted in writing to the Downtown Development Manager with specific basis for the appeal. The CCRP will

Downtown Building Assistance Program

Effective Date: 11/11/13

Page 6 of 7

hear the appeal at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the CCRP shall render a final decision on the appeal within seven (7) business days.

