

City of Rocky Mount Administrative Policy

Policy: Accelerated Façade Improvement Grant

Section:	Administrative	Policy No. II.42
Prepared By:	Kevin Harris, Downtown Development Manager	
Approved By:	City Council	
Effective Date:	January 9, 2023	Page: 1 of 7

SECTION 1. Purpose

In 1980, over 200 of the commercial buildings in central city area of the City of Rocky Mount were placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This was done in recognition of the unique character of the downtown area where most of the buildings were constructed in the early 1900's.

Yet, during the 1980's, the downtown area changed when the three major retail stores (Belk-Tyler, J.C. Penney, and Sears) relocated to Wesleyan Boulevard. This resulted in reduced shopping traffic, increasing vacancies, reduced tax valuation for downtown, and a growing perception of a deteriorating downtown.

The City Council established the Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP) in 200 for the purpose of initiating plans and programs that would encourage business development downtown and preserve the buildings in the downtown area. Upon the recommendation of the CCRP, the City Council adopted the subject policy, and others, as community development programs of assistance and financing intended to create an incentive for owners to invest in and preserve and restore the existing buildings downtown in order to maintain the unique historic character of the central city and create a vibrant and economically sustainable downtown Rocky Mount.

SECTION 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Accelerated Façade Improvement Grant Program (AFIG) will be administered by the following City Staff members:
- a. The Downtown Development Manager will serve as the primary contact for questions, concerns, application intake and program promotion; and
 - b. The Downtown Development Manager, and the Department of Community and Business Development will process and decide the applications, insuring compliance with policy; and
 - c. The Department of Development Services will insure all compliance with Building Code and Historic Preservation guidelines.
 - d. The Central City Revitalization Panel will be informed of the status of each application, including when approved/disapproved.

SECTION 3. The Accelerated Façade Impact Grant Guidelines

- 3.1 Commercial properties located within the Central City Business District, or Downtown Core located within the boundary streets of Franklin St., Goldleaf St, Atlantic Ave. and Raleigh Blvd. (collectively the "District") are eligible to participate in the AFIG Program. In addition to properties located within the District, properties abutting either side of a boundary street are also eligible to participate in the AFIG Program. This policy confirms the longstanding interpretation of City Staff. (see attached map)
- 3.2 The AFIG Program is designed to improve the outside appearance of Downtown buildings. For purposes of this policy a building façade is any face of a building that is visible from a street, parking lot, or other open space. A building may have more than one façade and each façade may be eligible for a separate grant.
- 3.3 Types of projects, which may be funded include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Brick or wall surface cleaning
Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning

of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

- 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
- 3.4 Plans for improvements must conform to existing building regulations of the City of Rocky Mount, and where applicable, the Rocky Mount Historic Preservation Commission Design Guidelines. All projects located in the historic district must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness or approval of Development Services staff prior to the funding approval.
- 3.5 Funding Formula: Subject to the availability of funding, the maximum grant award will be \$5,000.00 per façade. Any work done prior to the approval of a grant application is not eligible for funding.
- 3.6 Funding Eligibility Exclusions: The focus of the program is to encourage the development of downtown properties for commercial and residential use. The following are not eligible for funding:
- Religious organizations for sectarian purposes
 - Individual K-12 schools (public or private)
 - Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion
 - Political activities
 - Non-conforming uses

SECTION 4. Application Process

- 4.1 All applicants must:
- 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)
 - Furnish a current list of owners/partners and staff
 - Be current with city and county property taxes and/or utilities relative to proposed project
 - Provide and maintain current property insurance to cover the value of the structure and all improvements
- 4.2 The application and supporting material will be collected by the Downtown Manager and Department of Community and Business Development for review and approval/disapproval.
- 4.3 No work shall begin prior to application or prior to notification of grant approval.
- 4.4 Applications will be made available via City website, in person at the Community and Business Development Department offices located at City Hall, 331 S. Franklin St. (2nd floor). Every effort will be made to work with the applicant in preparing eligible projects.
- 4.5 **Complete applications will also include:**
- **Current photographs of the building and historic images if available**
 - **Detailed listing and description of proposed renovations**
 - **A quote for proposed work**
 - **Copies of any applicable permits**
 - **Owner's written permission (if applicable)**
 - **Proof of current property insurance**
 - **Organization By-Laws if a corporation**
- 4.6 All façade improvement projects within the Downtown Core are eligible to apply. (As defined in section 3.1). Properties representing the greatest need for improvement; and projects involving overall renovation will have greater preference. When appropriate documentation has been filed, staff will review applications to determine if it is eligible for consideration. Applicants may be requested to attend a meeting to further explain the proposed project, if deemed necessary.

- 4.7 A notification letter will be sent to the applicant as to whether the project has been accepted, accepted with conditions, or rejected.
- 4.8 Façade improvements to be funded by the AFIG must be started and be completed within 90 days of the notification of the grant approval.
- 4.9 Failure to complete the project by this date could result in loss of funding. The Community and Business Department, prior to the deadline date of completion, must approve any extensions of completion date. In no event shall any grants be extended beyond 12 months of initial approval.
- 4.10 Any major deviation from the approved plans must be approved prior to being undertaken. The Community and Development Department reserves the right to deny payment if completed work is inconsistent with the contents of the original application or is of insufficient quality.
- 4.11 Once the project is completed in accordance with the approved plans, paid invoices and cancelled checks are to be provided to the Downtown Development Manager.
- 4.12 Once the Façade improvements are completed and inspected by the Downtown Development Manager, and Development Services, a check will be issued for the amount of invoiced work or receipts not to exceed \$5,000.
- 4.13 Two funding options are available:
1. 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
 2. Applicant and Contractor, prior to work beginning, can formally request City make payment directly to contractor(s) after work is complete. (No more than two vendors will be paid).
- 4.14 Upon satisfactory completion of all work required, the Community and Business Development Director, and Downtown Development Manager, 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.

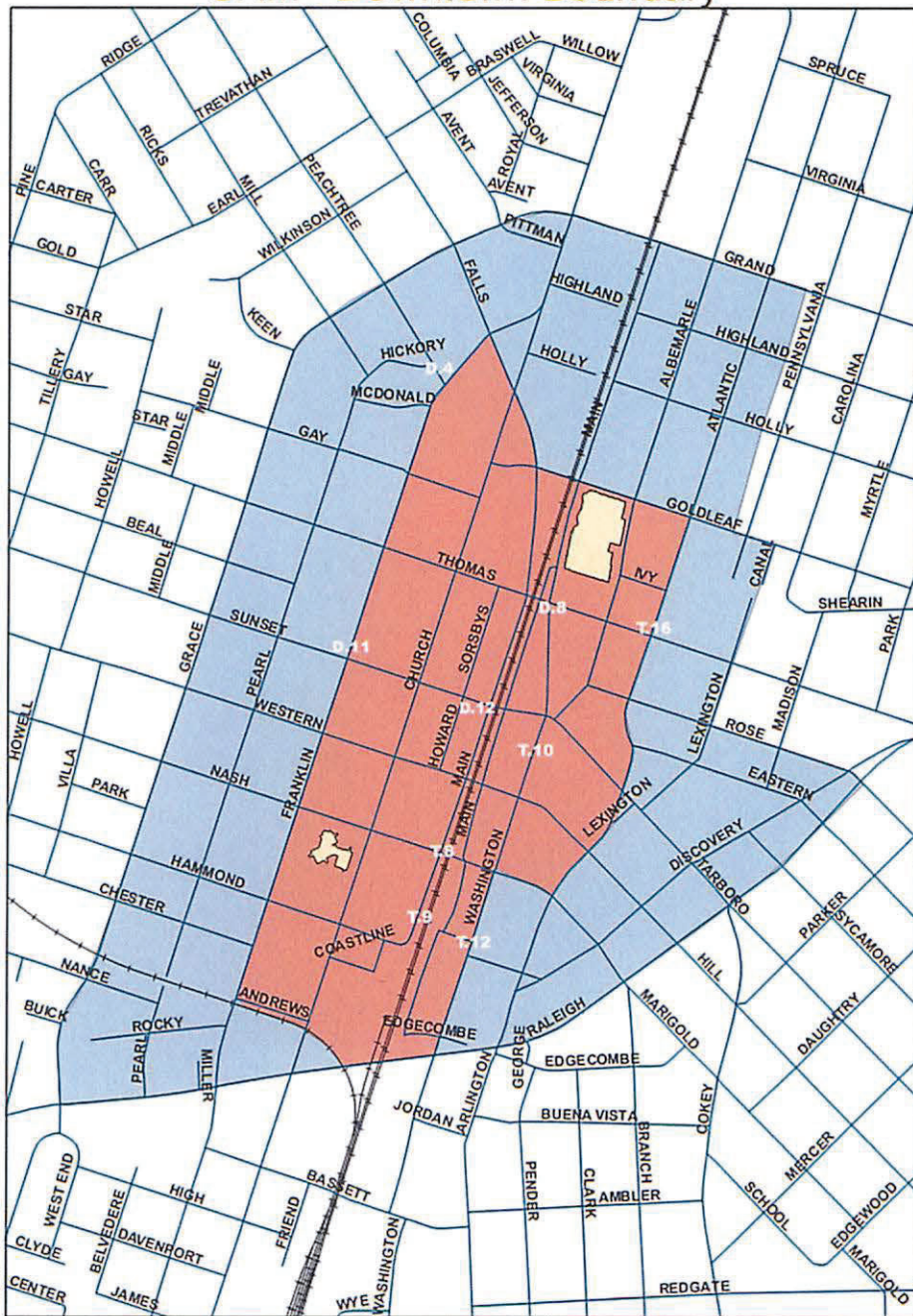
Section 5: Appeal Process

- 5.1 The Central city Revitalization Panel Serve will serve as an appeal board for applicants who wish to appeal an application denial or make a complaint regarding the process or treatment;

Persons applying for the AFIG will have ten (10) business days to appeal the denial decision of staff to the Central City Revitalization Panel. Notice of the appeal must be submitted in writing to Community and Business Development with specific basis for the appeal. The Central City Revitalization Panel will hear the appeal at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Upon completion of the hearing, the CCRP shall provide a final decision on the appeal within five (5) business days. The decision of the CCRP shall be final.

The City of Rocky Mount Community and Business Development Department in conjunction with any other City Department reserves the right to reject any incomplete or unclear application. All projects receiving all or partial funding maybe made public. The CRM does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation, or national origin. For additional information regarding requirements or eligibility call 252-972-1100.

CRM - Downtown Boundary



Legend

- Event Center and City Hall
- Downtown Core
- Downtown Boundary

