

City of Tempe

Storefront Improvement Program Guidelines



City of Tempe
Neighborhood Revitalization & Redevelopment Division
May 1, 2013

The Storefront Improvement Program is designed to revitalize and improve neighborhood commercial areas and enhance the livability of surrounding neighborhoods.

PURPOSE

The City of Tempe Storefront Improvement Program assists business owners of commercial property in rehabilitating their streetside storefronts to revitalize neighborhood commercial areas, support small businesses, eliminate blight and code violations, and stabilize older neighborhoods.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Applicants: The City will only accept applications from owners of Tempe commercial properties. As part of the application process, applicants must prove their ownership of assisted properties through a Deed, Bill of Sale or other legally verifiable document. If owners feel that it is in their best interest, they may, at their discretion, delegate responsibility for project implementation to a tenant.
2. Incentives: The City will waive all permit and plan review fees for approved projects. Program participants will not be required to pay for any fees at the time of application for plan review, nor at the issuance of a permit. Furthermore, the City will offer expedited plan review to all program participants regardless of fee structure.
3. Eligible properties: Only storefronts abutting a public right-of-way or other city owned property that is accessible to the general public are eligible. This includes rear and side facades for through lots and corner properties. Only structures that are at least 10 years old are eligible.
4. Project Selection: While the City will accept applications from any Tempe commercial property owner, those projects that conform to the following will receive higher preference:
 - a. Reduce most visible and numerous code violations
 - b. Eliminate physically deteriorated conditions

The City's Storefront Improvement Committee (SIC) will review and evaluate project proposals based on these criteria. In all cases, the SIC will have final determination as to the eligibility of proposed projects.

5. Target Areas: Commercial properties located in the City's designated target areas may be eligible to apply for financial assistance in the Storefront Improvement Program (see SIP/CDBG Addendum). These areas include the Apache Boulevard Redevelopment Area, as well as census tracts identified as

containing at least 51% low and moderate income households that are also primarily residential in composition.

As the intent of this program is the improvement of aging commercial sites, the City will require that applicants take a holistic approach to their façade restoration projects. As such, the City will judge projects by the degree that they address the entire street-facing façade, and not just pieces of it. Furthermore, the City will also review projects for the cohesiveness of design elements at the project site, as well as the overall design concept's compatibility with neighboring properties and the City's long-term redevelopment goals.

6. Eligible work: Rehabilitation of building facades visible to the street, including storefronts; cornices; gutters and downspouts; signs and graphics; exterior lighting; canopies and awnings; painting and masonry cleaning; and limited security and accessibility improvements.

Eligible items include any work related to:

- a. Windows
- b. Doors
- c. Masonry, stucco or other wall surface treatment
- d. Painting
- e. Awnings/canopies
- f. Signage
- g. Commercial code violations
- h. Exterior lighting attached to the structure
- i. Exterior ADA accessibility modifications
- j. Parking improvements and walkways
- k. Other exterior items determined by the City to be consistent with its long-range redevelopment goals

The following repairs are allowed as long as they are part of work which directly affects the street elevation: landscaping; fences; seal coating and re-stripping of parking lots; bike racks; interior window display lighting, and limited paving and walkways.

7. Ineligible work: This program is not designed to address:

- a. roofs;
- b. structural foundations;
- c. billboards;
- d. security systems;
- e. non-permanent fixtures;
- f. interior window coverings;
- g. vinyl awnings;
- h. personal property and equipment;
- i. security bars;
- j. razor/barbed wire fencing.

APPLICATION

Participants must submit a written application. Information required includes:

- Proposed budget for project;
- A copy of current insurance coverage to verify that the property is properly insured;
- A copy of the registered property deed with the legal description of the property;
- Proof that all property taxes are paid to date;
- Copies of lease(s) associated with property;

Tempe's Project Manager will meet with applicant to review the conditions of the building and the site that are visible from the street, and identify potential or existing code violations. Staff will work with applicant to accomplish an expedited review process.

APPROVAL

The City of Tempe Community Development Department has the sole authority to determine eligibility of proposed work and confirmation of completed work. Eligibility will be determined by the Storefront Improvement Committee (SIC). Certain work may be required or precluded as a condition of participation. Participants will be responsible for obtaining necessary regulatory approvals.

LETTER OF COMMITMENT

Accepted applicants will receive a Letter of Commitment outlining terms and conditions which must be met in order to obtain a fees waiver. When signed, this letter will serve as the legal commitment of both parties as to the scope and quality of work and the amount of fees to be waived. The City of Tempe will review and approve proposed work and insure all other conditions are met.

FEES WAIVED

The maximum waiver of building, sign and plan check fees for each project is 100% of the total fee amount. Waiver of fees requires completion of pre-approved work as verified by City staff in a Letter of Completion. Should the work not be completed, applicant will be responsible for all fees.

FUNDING ASSISTANCE

Properties located in the Apache Boulevard Redevelopment District, or an eligible CDBG area, may be eligible for matching funds, up to a maximum of \$100,000 for a Storefront Improvement Program CDBG project. In such case, a separate agreement with additional requirements and terms and conditions of use of funds will be required (see Addendum A, SIP/CDBG Guidelines).