



PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

The City of Mountain View Façade Improvement Grant Program is designed to stimulate investment in commercial buildings with first floor storefront businesses. To encourage economic vitality and commercial viability of storefront businesses, the City will share the costs of improving and enhancing commercial façades with grants of up to \$17,500 in value for façade improvement projects, including architectural design services, that meet the program eligibility criteria. The Façade Improvement Program hopes to accomplish the following goals:

1. Visually improve storefronts and streetscapes.
2. Enhance prominent retail and commercial areas; and
3. Rehabilitate or replace historic features.

The Façade Improvement Grant Program will be awarded on a first come, first served basis to eligible applicants whose projects meet the façade improvement eligibility criteria described below. Projects may include certain exterior façade improvements to first floor commercial storefront retail, restaurants, or service businesses. Additionally, the grant program will fund architectural design services associated with eligible façade improvements. **Applications will be accepted through December 31, 2026.** Download the application online at econdev.mountainview.gov.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Located in a street-facing commercial building/space
2. The applicant is a Mountain View small business owner, a Mountain View commercial property owner, or a non-profit serving the community of Mountain View.

The business/tenant must have a City of Mountain View business license and there must be no active violations on the building and/or business.

Funding and Project Eligibility

The Façade Improvement Program incentivizes existing and new businesses with improvements to their tenant building facades and is a tool to support the re-tenanting of vacant commercial spaces by improving curb appeal. The program includes the following elements:

1. **Architectural Design Services:** Grantees may request \$2,500 (or approximately 10 hours of time) for architectural design services to help guide the design for eligible façade improvements. Grantees will be able to choose one of the following options related to architectural services:



Option 1: Choose to work with a city-retained architect. The City will pay the architect for their services directly. The City has retained the services of M Designs Architects to provide guidance on eligible façade improvements and will pay the architect directly related to the services provided as part of this grant program. Architectural Design Services from the city-retained architect may include:

- a) Pre-contract consultation with business or property owner(s) to discuss preliminary design concepts and determine total project costs.
- b) Review of building and as-built drawings. **Please note:** If as-built drawings are not provided with the grant application, the grant recipient will be responsible for the cost of architectural services needed to prepare up to date as-built drawings.
- c) Architectural design guidance for eligible façade improvements

Option 2: Choose to work with a firm of your choice and for a maximum reimbursable amount of \$2,500. Grantees who wish to work with an architectural firm of their choice will need to identify in their application the services to be provided by the architect firm and can submit proof of payment in accordance with the standard reimbursement request process.

- 2. **Facade Improvements:** The Citywide Façade Improvement Grant Program will provide 75% matching City grant funds to Grantees, in an amount not to exceed \$15,000. A business, non-profit, or property owner can pursue a one-time grant for a façade improvement project. Qualifying Improvements will be reimbursed at a rate of 75% up to \$15,000.

Table 1: Façade Improvement

Qualifying Façade Improvements	Maximum Grant Matching Amount
Non-Architectural improvements: Awnings, parapets, new signs, sign removal, storefront window displays	\$15,000 For all improvements
Painting: Exterior painting, murals/art	
Architectural improvements: Window or door refurbishment / replacement, historic features	



Reimbursement

Façade Improvements are reimbursable (with the exception of services provided by the city-retained architect). Grant funds will be issued to Grantees through reimbursement based upon an approved scope of work, including cost estimate(s), and issued City permit(s), if required, associated with each grant application approved. Grantees will need to be prepared to cover all façade improvement costs up front before being reimbursed by the City for the agreed upon grant amount.

The maximum grant value will not exceed \$17,500.

For example, if the total project cost is \$30,000 or more, the Grantee may be reimbursed the maximum grant award of \$15,000 (after the project is complete, and a reimbursement request is submitted and approved).

If the Grantee opts to receive design assistance from a City-retained architect, they will receive services equaling to an additional \$2,500, for a total not to exceed the maximum grant value of \$17,500.

If the Grantee opts to work with an outside design firm, the City will reimburse design services equaling to and additional \$2,500, for a total not to exceed the maximum grant value of \$17,500.

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The Façade Improvement Grant Program is open until all funds are allocated. Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis to eligible applicants whose projects meet the façade improvement eligibility criteria. Applications will be accepted through December 31, 2026 or until grant funds are exhausted.

1. **Review Program guidelines.** Review the guidelines and application form, available online at econdev.mountainview.gov, to understand the program goals, eligibility criteria, and process.
2. **Submit a completed application.** Property owner and/or business owner must submit the following to the City staff. The application will include:
 - Applicant information, site information, and an acknowledgement / signature.
 - If applicant is a tenant, application must include the property owner's signature.
 - Project information and scope of work details.
 - Vendor/contractor estimates
 - Estimates must reflect [California prevailing wage requirements \(Prevailing Wage FAQ\)](#).
 - Photos or drawings of existing conditions
 - Copy of the applicant's business license
 - W-9 form (current within the last year)
 - Additional attachments as identified in the checklist of items to be included for architectural services.

Send the completed application to econ.dev@mountainview.gov. Alternatively, deliver a completed application to the City of Mountain View Community Development Department at 500 Castro Street.



3. **City staff will review applications.** A committee of internal staff will review applications and follow up with applicants to discuss the scope of work. Staff may approve, disapprove, or approve with conditions. Staff will advise grantees on the permitting requirements once review is complete. Program applications will be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis, and evaluated based on the fulfillment of the program goals.
4. **Selection of grantees and contract.** Once the grant is awarded, the grantee must enter into an agreement with the City of Mountain View to carry out the work as described in the final approved scope of work.
5. **Grantee to secure necessary Permits.** If planning or building approval is required, the grantee is responsible for submitting project plans to the respective divisions. When a planning permit is required, project plans must be prepared by a licensed architect. When a building permit is required, plans must meet all Code requirements through the Building Division. See [Table 2: Façade Improvement Permit Matrix](#) for additional details on permits required.
6. **Complete the work.** After receiving all required approvals and permits, the grantee shall complete the improvements **within six (6) months or within the timeline designated within the agreement.** The applicant is responsible for contacting City staff to request an extension if necessary (an extension is not guaranteed). All permits must have completed final inspections prior to reimbursement.
7. **Standard reimbursement request process.** Grantee must submit all documentation as required within 30-days of project completion or planning/building permit approval. Documents for reimbursement include proof of payment, such as invoices and receipts and proof of project completion including photos. The request for reimbursement will need to include an itemized list of all expenses and corresponding receipts or proof of payment as documentation for any and all expenses and must follow the schedule outlined in the Grant contract.

PREVAILING WAGE

Use of public funds may trigger [prevailing wage](#) requirements per the [California Department of Industrial Relations \(DIR\)](#). Prevailing Wage is the basic hourly rate paid on public works projects to a majority of workers engaged in a particular craft, classification or type of work within the locality and in the nearest labor market area (if a majority of such workers are paid at a single rate).

Prevailing wages shall be paid when the total construction cost is \$15,000 or more. Where the total project cost is \$15,000 or more, all estimates and payments for construction and installation of façade improvements shall include prevailing wages and shall otherwise comply with the provisions of Sections 1773.8, 1775, 1776, 1777.5, 1777.6 and 1813 of the California Labor Code and all other applicable laws and regulations with respect to prevailing wages.

Where prevailing wage is triggered, in accordance with Labor Code section 1720 et seq., prevailing wages shall be paid for all façade improvements; use of volunteer labor is not allowed. California [wage schedules](#) are available from DIR. Participants in the program are responsible for ensuring that the improvements are in compliance with the Prevailing Wage Law, and all projects are registered with the Department of Industrial Relations.

[Frequently Asked Questions - Prevailing Wage \(dir.ca.gov\)](#)



PERMITS REQUIRED

Most Façade Improvement projects will require permits through the Building and Planning Divisions. Please refer to the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Façade Improvement Permit Matrix

Façade Improvement	Building Permit	Planning Permit	Excavation Permit
Awning or canopy replacement	Commercial Tenant Improvement Permit	Formal Planning Application¹	An Excavation Permit is required for all construction work and temporary traffic impacts within the public street or sidewalk area, referred to as the public right-of-way.
Exterior lighting			
Paint			
Windows	Formal Planning Application² + Required Application Materials for Sign Permit		
Signage Chapter 36, Article XII – Signs		Sign Installation Permit	
Architectural Design Services	Designs to be submitted with relevant permit(s), as applicable.		

NOTE: Façade Improvement Grant Funds may apply to permit costs associated with each of the above.

Contractor requirements: All contractors hired for a Façade Improvement Grant project are required to be licensed contractors and must be paid in compliance with the Prevailing Wage Law; applicants must provide proof of compliance. For all grants, the grantee (or their contractor) will also be required to show proof of minimum insurance requirements, including listing the City as an additional insured party.

Additional permit resources:

- [Planning Permit Application Fees](#)
- [Submitting for Building Permits](#) (main page)
- [Planning Application Forms and Fees](#)
- [Development Review Process](#)
- [Downtown Sign Guidelines](#) (For Downtown only)
- [Excavation Permit Application](#)

¹ Zoning Administrator may exempt minor exterior or site modification as allowed pursuant to [Municipal Code Section 36.44.60](#). Program staff will verify permit requirements.