

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-05

INTRODUCED BY: MAYOR MICHAEL DYLAN BRENNAN

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF A STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE CITY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

WHEREAS, the City wishes to create a Storefront Improvement Program to be administered through the City's Economic Development Department, for the purpose of providing financial assistance to local business owners in making structural, cosmetic and aesthetic improvements and renovations to their storefront locations;

WHEREAS, in order for an application to be accepted under the Program, a proposed project must upgrade the physical appearance of the subject building and boost "curb appeal";

WHEREAS, the Program will aid in improving aesthetics and eliminating blight, by promoting investment in existing commercial structures and incentivizing upkeep and renovation of commercial properties throughout the City;

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the Program will enhance the look and feel of commercial areas within the City, and thereby promote shopping in those areas, to the benefit of the local economy;

WHEREAS, the Program will promote reuse and redevelopment of existing commercial structures, thereby helping to achieve those goals as set forth in the City's Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, under the Program, certain eligible owners of commercial buildings may be reimbursed up to fifty percent (50%) of the total cost of eligible improvement, up to a maximum reimbursement of \$25,000.00;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO, THAT:

Section 1: City Council hereby authorizes the creation of a Storefront Improvement Plan to be administered through the City's Economic Development Department, pursuant to certain eligibility criteria and guidelines established by the Economic Development Department pursuant to its Guidelines, a copy of which are attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference as if fully rewritten, and pursuant to the Program Application, a copy of which are attached hereto as Exhibit B and incorporated herein by reference as if fully rewritten.

Section 2: The Economic Development Director shall be authorized to amend and modify the eligibility criteria for the Storefront Improvement Program from time to time by amending or modifying the Guidelines or the Program Application, provided that any such amendments or modifications are reviewed and approved by the City's Law Director prior to implementation.

Section 3: The Council hereby finds and determines that all formal actions relative to the passage of this Ordinance were taken in an open meeting of this Council, that all deliberations of this Council and of its committees, if any, which results in formal action were taken in meetings open to the public, in full compliance with the applicable legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the ORC.

CITY OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OHIO


MICHAEL DYLAN BRENNAN, MAYOR

FIRST READING: 02/04/2019

PASSED: 02/20/2019

ATTEST:


KELLY M. THOMAS, CLERK OF COUNCIL

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


LUKE F. MCCONVILLE, LAW DIRECTOR

EXHIBIT A

STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- Projects must be located in the City of University Heights.
- An applicant may be reimbursed up to fifty percent (50%) of the total cost of eligible improvements, up to a maximum grant of \$25,000.00.
- An applicant whose project is accepted into the Program will be provided with written notification that his/her/its application was accepted, including information as to the size of the grant awarded.
- Construction of any approved project must be completed within nine (9) months from the date of the notice of acceptance.
- Grant will be paid by the City following (i) completion of construction and/or installation of the approved project, (ii) final inspection and approval of any improvements by the City's Building Department, and (iii) presentation by the applicant of any and all invoices, receipts and other evidence of expenditures to the satisfaction of the City.
- Any grant award made by the City through the Program is contingent upon appropriation of funds by City Council to fund the Program. The City makes no representation or warranty that City Council will appropriate funds to the Program. However, the City will only approve an application and provide notice of a grant award in instances where funds have already been appropriated by Council.
- Only projects related to buildings that meet certain zoning requirements and are used solely for commercial purposes are eligible.
- Unless otherwise restricted by the terms of the program, buildings located in U-6 (Office Building District), U-7 (Local Retail District), U-8 (Shopping Center District), and U-9 (Cedar Center/Mixed Use District) are eligible
- Banks, savings and loans associations, gas and service stations, and home-based businesses are not eligible.
- Improvements to buildings occupied by or owned by national franchises or their franchisees are not eligible.
- Funds cannot be used for new construction.
- Projects started prior to approval of the application are not eligible.
- Eligible projects may include:
 - Masonry/brick
 - Pointing
 - Cornices
 - Exterior painting
 - Windows/glazing
 - Exterior doors
 - Exterior façade
 - Lighting
 - Awnings
 - Signage

EXHIBIT B
(attach Program Application)

Exhibit B

The City of University Heights is committed to helping our small businesses thrive. The purpose of the Storefront Improvement Program (SIP) is to encourage businesses and property owners within the City's commercial districts to improve the front exterior and the physical appearance of their commercial properties, making these areas more attractive to shoppers, more aesthetically pleasing, and growing their vitality and economic performance.

This program is designed to provide financial assistance to property owners to renovate existing building storefronts that they would not otherwise be able to fund. The program reimburses owners of commercial buildings up to 50% of the total cost of eligible improvements, up to \$25,000, for a comprehensive exterior renovation of the front and visible sides of the building that make a significant visual impact. Any eligible improvement project must be designed to upgrade the physical appearance of the building and to boost curb appeal. Only building owners may apply. Please keep in mind that projects already underway prior to approval of the application are **not** eligible. All applications must be submitted through the City of University Heights Economic Development Department.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step One - Is your project eligible?

1. SIP projects must be located within the City of University Heights, Ohio.
2. Only projects related to buildings that meet certain zoning requirements, as hereafter set forth, used solely for commercial purposes, and not otherwise excluded by the terms of the SIP, are eligible for SIP funding. Unless otherwise restricted by the terms of the SIP, commercial businesses located in the U-6 Office Building District, U-7 Local Retail District, U-8 Shopping Center District and U-9 Cedar Center/Mixed Use District will be eligible for the SIP.
3. Commercial buildings including, but not necessarily limited to, retail, professional services (e.g. doctors, lawyers, accountants, architects, etc.), certain repair services, (e.g. office equipment, radio/television, bicycle, furniture, locksmith, etc.), and business services (e.g. advertising, office management, printing, etc.) are eligible for SIP.
4. Banks, savings and loans associations, gas and service stations, and home-based businesses are not eligible. Improvements to buildings occupied by or owned by national franchises or their franchisees, are not eligible.
5. Adjoining commercial buildings, with more than one owner, are eligible only if the proposed improvements are made to the entire frontage of all such adjoining businesses or structures. In addition, all building owners must be included in the application and process.
6. SIP funds cannot be used for new construction.
7. Email sdrucker@universityheights.com or call 216-848-0733 to schedule an appointment to discuss your project and the process.

Step Two - Plan your project

1. Meet with a representative from the Economic Development Department to review your plans. A site visit to your building is required.
2. Discuss ways to improve your storefront and review program requirements.
3. Eligible projects include, but are not necessarily limited to, masonry/brick pointing, cornices, exterior painting, windows/glazing, exterior doors, exterior façade lighting, awnings and signage.

Step Three - Apply

1. Once you are ready to apply you will need the following:
 - Color, digital photographs of your storefront and immediate surroundings
 - Illustrations showing the proposed improvements
 - Estimates from at least two licensed contractors are required
 - Completed application
 - i. IRS Form W-9
 - ii. Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws (for corporate applicants)
 - iii. Articles of Organization & Operating Agreement (for LLC applicants)
 - iv. Partnership Agreement (for partnership entities)
 - v. Any other governing documents required by City, but not listed.
2. Send your application and required documentation by email to sdrucker@universityheights.com or by mail to Economic Development Department, 2300 Warrensville Center Road, University Heights, OH 44118.
3. Applications will be reviewed for completeness and design. Application review may require the applicant to attend Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board, (ARB), and/or City Council meetings to present their application.
4. Application review will occur promptly. The City anticipates that the process from application to approval may take approximately four (4) to six (6) weeks, but may take longer depending on a variety of factors such as the applicant's preparedness, questions relating to eligibility, the volume of applications or City projects, the availability of City Board members, completion of the necessary approval process from Various City Boards, and whether the application is filed in temporal proximity to holidays.
5. You **must** wait for final approval from City Council before beginning any work on this project to maintain eligibility for incentive program funds

Step Four - Begin work

1. Receive approval letter then sign and return W-9 and Reimbursement Requirements forms.
2. Obtain building and zoning permits
3. Approved applicants have up to nine (9) months to complete the proposed improvements.
4. If you wish to make substantive changes to a project that has already received approval,, you must submit new estimates and a revised proposal, which may need to be reviewed again by Planning Commission, ARB, and/or City Council. Whether any proposed changes to a project that has already received approval are substantive in nature shall be determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the City.

Step Five - Receive funds

1. Expenses will be reimbursed to the applicant upon completion of the approved project and final inspections by the City of University Heights Building Department.
2. Submit completion documents:
 - Copies of final invoices from contractors showing payment in full for work completed as part or in whole of the approved project.
 - Proof of payment in the form of copies of cancelled checks (front and back), credit card statements, or money orders. If you pay your contractor in cash, we will not be able to reimburse you.
 - Copies of any required permits
 - Color photographs of the completed work
3. Should the final total cost of the project exceed the scope of the original application, as approved by City Council, the applicant will have sole financial responsibility for all the work in excess of the final approved project and grant award.

PART I - APPLICANT INFORMATION

Business Location:

Address of Property Being Improved: -

Applicant Name - Applicants must be the owner of the commercial building above.

Applicant Name (person or company applying for rebate)

Applicant's Mailing Address

Contact Person & Title

Contact Phone # _____ Fax # _____

Email

BUSINESS INFORMATION - Applicants must be operating legally, properly registered, licensed with the City of University Heights, and current with all city taxes, including but not limited to taxes, licenses, sewer billings, etc., as well as any assessments due to Business/Neighborhood Improvement Districts or Special Services Districts.

Legal Name of Property Owner

PART 3 - STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT COSTS

Use this form to itemize costs of improvements planned for your storefront. You must also attach the estimates from at least two contractors.

PRE-DEVELOPMENT COSTS

SERVICE	COSTS	CONTRACTOR/VENDOR
Design/architecture services	\$	
Permits and associated fees	\$	
SUBTOTAL	\$	

CONSTRUCTION COSTS

IMPROVEMENT TYPE	TOTAL COST	CONTRACTOR/VENDOR
Façade masonry/Brick pointing	\$	
Cornices	\$	
Exterior Painting	\$	
Windows/Glazing	\$	
Exterior Doors	\$	
Exterior Façade Lighting	\$	
Signage	\$	
Canopies/Awnings	\$	
Handicapped Ramps	\$	
Demolition	\$	
Other	\$	
Roof Repairs/Replacement	\$	
Landscaping	\$	
Parking Lot Improvements	\$	
SUBTOTAL	\$	
TOTAL COST (PRE-DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION)	\$	
GRANT REQUEST	\$	

PART 2 - STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

Describe your proposed improvements in the box below. Improvements must be made to the exterior and visible to the public and preserve and enhance the architectural integrity of the building.

DESIGN REVIEW - Applications will be reviewed by the ARB who may suggest changes or require specific changes to the proposed work for the application to be approved and be eligible for reimbursement.

PART 4 - APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS

CHECKLIST - Please attach the following:

1. Color digital photographs of your building sent via email clearly showing the following:
 - Areas that will be improved;
 - The entire front façade of your building; and
 - The views down the block to the right and left of your building.
2. An illustration of the work you would like to do. Any of the following are acceptable:
 - A printed-out digital picture with written notes; or
 - A photo with post-it notes attached; or
 - An architect's rendering.

NOTE: if your project includes signs or awnings, please ask your contractor to prepare a picture of the new sign or awning showing all dimensions, materials, colors, and lettering.
3. Estimates from at least two contractors are required.

Additional Program Requirements

- Applications submitted after construction has begun will not be considered.
- A property improved under this program may apply for the maximum \$25,000 allowances no more than once every five (5) years.
- The amount that this program is able to approve for reimbursement will not always be equal to 50% of the eligible costs or the maximum amount due to availability of funds and restrictions in how program funds can be spent.

PART 5 - CERTIFICATION FOR COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

I certify that:

1. The information contained here is accurate.
2. The property owner(s) is/are current with all City obligations, including but not limited to taxes, licenses, sewer billings etc., as well as any assessments due to Business/Neighborhood Improvement Districts or Special Services Districts. All permits, licenses, environmental and historical requirements associated with the above work will be complied with.
3. I have read and will comply with the requirements outlined in this application.

APPLICANT OR DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE

Name _____

Title _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Submit your completed application to the Economic Development Director, or email sdrucker@universityheights.com, or mail to Economic Development Department, 2300 Warrensville Center Road, University Heights, OH 44118.

You will receive a notification by email when your application is received.

Application questions can be directed to Susan Drucker, Economic Development Director, at 216-848-0733