



**Planning and Community Development  
Façade Improvement Program**

## Program Overview

The Façade Improvement Program is intended to encourage economic development and foster community pride along the Mayport Road Corridor for properties located within the Façade Improvement Area shown in Figure 1. This program provides grant funds to finance quality exterior improvements to buildings and vehicle use areas visible to the public. The program is managed by the Planning and Community Development Department, under the direction of the City Manager.

## Program Purpose

The purpose of the program is to provide an opportunity for property owners or their tenants to upgrade the exterior of their buildings to attract tenants, strengthen the image of Mayport Road, increase utilization of existing buildings, enhance economic vitality, and improve property values. Mayport Road is an important commercial corridor in Atlantic Beach and a prime area for growth for new businesses due to distressed properties and high traffic volumes along the corridor. This area is a major focus for revitalization due to its importance to the City's image and future vitality of adjacent neighborhoods.

## Available Funding

The program is a reimbursement program. Reimbursement payments will be issued to property/business owners after City staff has verified the completion of projects through site visits and review of receipts. Each applicant is responsible for the design and construction improvements to their buildings or vehicle parking areas. The program is administrated on a first-come, first-served basis to the limit of available funding and in accordance with the City's appropriated funds for the fiscal year. If the total value of funding requested for applications exceeds the total amount of funding available, applications will be prioritized by the Planning and Community Development Department staff. Properties with frontage on Mayport Road shall receive priority over properties fronting on side streets.

## Eligibility

Prospective applicants for the grant funding are property owners or their business tenants who are improving the exterior facades of existing buildings or vehicle parking areas that are visible from public spaces within the Façade Improvement Area (Figure 1). Only buildings with commercial use(s) on the ground floor are eligible for grants. The City's Director of Planning and Community Development may recommend exceptions to these guidelines on a case-by-case basis. Applicants may receive assistance for more than one building at a time on separate parcels if funding is available. A maximum of one grant application per parcel will be accepted each fiscal year. The City reserves the right to deny applications from businesses of non-conforming uses and from property or business owners who are in violation of code or delinquent on payment of local business taxes, fines or fees.

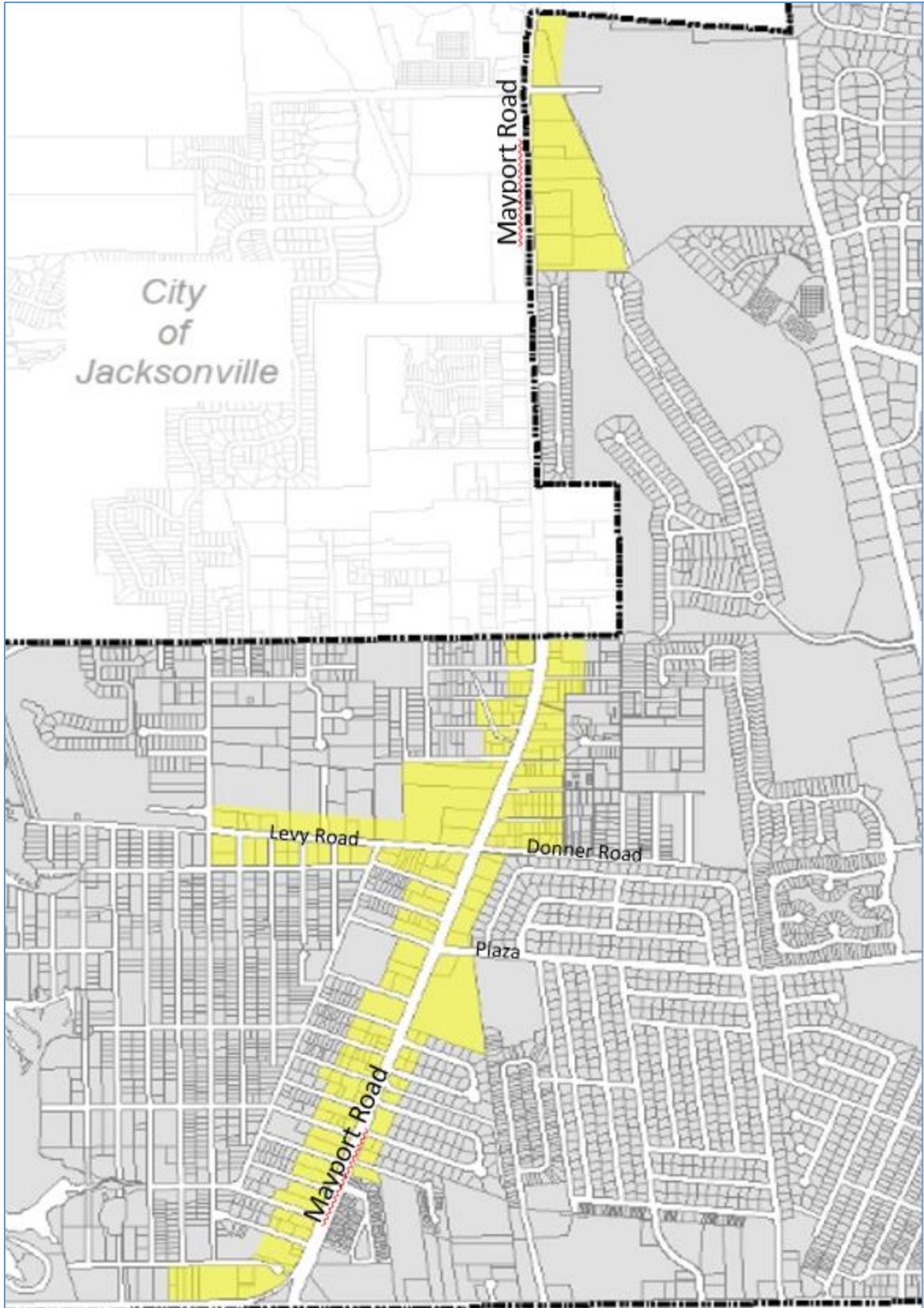


Figure 1: Façade Improvement Area

## Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses are improvements to building facades, roofs or vehicle parking areas that are visible from public rights-of-way or other public spaces.

Eligible improvements include:

- Exterior signage
- Exterior painting
- Awnings
- Storefront redesign, reconstruction and enhancements (Figure 4)
- Vehicle parking area treatments to include but not limited to paving, sealing and striping of parking lots and driveways
- Landscaping (Figure 3)
- Outdoor lighting
- Outdoor tables, chairs, benches, bicycle racks and umbrellas located next to pedestrian areas which enhance the pedestrian environment and are open to the public (Figure 4)
- Dumpster/storage screening; fencing
- Pervious patios, walkways and other similar surfaces
- Roofs
- Consultant or contractor fees associated with project construction

All work that requires a permit must be completed by a licensed contractor legally operating in the City of Atlantic Beach.



Figure 2: Storefront Redesign



Figure 3: Landscaping



Figure 4: Outdoor Seating

## Ineligible Expenses

Funds may not be used for improvements that are not permanent, mounted or affixed to the building, sidewalk or landscaped areas that are visible from public rights-of-way or public spaces. In addition, funds may not be used towards the complete redevelopment of a site.

Ineligible uses include but are not limited to:

- Vinyl letter signage (windows)
- Portable signs such as sandwich board or A-frame signs; signs not mounted or attached to storefronts; and flags or banners
- Moveable structures and equipment that do not enhance the pedestrian environment
- Improvements that are required due to code violations
- Interior improvements (Figure 5)
- Improvements not visible from public rights-of-way or a public space
- Personal time of the property owner or tenant



*Figure 5: Interior Improvements*

Grant funds shall not be applied retroactively to any project in the event that construction began prior to approval of a grant application. However, funds may be applied retroactively to cover design costs or other professional fees associated with the production of information required for a complete facade grant application.

## Façade Improvement Grant Amounts

The maximum allowable award is \$5,000 per project location (depending on the impact of the improvement on Mayport Road) with the property owner/business owner required to pay a match of at least 50 percent of the total project cost. For example, if the total project cost is \$10,000, the applicant must provide at least \$5,000 toward the project.

## Minimum Design Standards

At a minimum, eligible projects must comply with the City of Atlantic Beach's commercial corridor design standards and the Mayport Business Overlay District regulations where applicable.

## Additional Design Standards

- **Building Façade Materials**

Priority will be given to projects that use materials commonly or historically used in the area, such as tabby stucco, brick, wood, shake siding, metal and glass. A variety of compatible contrasting textures should be used to create visual interest. Single material facades should be avoided. (Figure 6)



*Figure 6: Mix of Materials*

- **Colors**

Qualifying projects shall utilize color schemes harmonious with the natural environment of the area. Earth tones shall be chosen as the predominate colors for façade improvements. Primary colors shall be avoided except for minimal accents on architectural features, wall murals, or other art.

- **Roofs**

Only portions of roofs visible from public right-of-way or public spaces qualify for façade grant funding. Roofs that qualify for funding shall have one of the following architectural characteristics:

- Gable, hip, or shed design with a minimum 6/12 pitch.
- Mansard design
- Undulating parapet that interrupts a flat roofline

- **Awnings**

Priority will be given to projects that incorporate awnings that enhance the pedestrian experience or provide shelter for outdoor seating.

- **Signage**

Projection signs above awnings and doorways are encouraged.

- **Lighting**

Qualifying lighting shall be down-lit at a 90 degree angle, highlight architectural features or signage, and not project directly onto adjacent properties. (Figure 7)



Figure 7: Down Lighting

## Application Process

Before submitting an application, property or business owners interested in applying for facade improvement grants should contact the Director of Planning and Community Development to set up an appointment to discuss the potential project. The Director of Planning and Community Development will advise the applicant as to the applicable standards for the project.

## Application Package

Application packages for facade improvement grants should include:

- A completed façade improvement grant application.
- Verification of property ownership (title or deed of trust) and, if the applicant is a tenant, a consent letter from the property owner approving the proposed changes.
- A detailed written scope of the proposed project.
- Color photos of the existing facades or vehicle use area in the proposal.
- Sketches, photos, site plans, architectural plans, elevations and renderings needed to illustrate the proposed project or requested by Planning and Community Development staff.
- Project timeline.
- Itemized budget including the estimated total.

City staff will review application packages for completion and will notify applicants if additional information or revisions are needed. If funding is still available, applications will be presented to the City Commission for consideration within 30 days of being approved by City staff. Applicants will be notified of approval, denial or need for additional information within 10 days of the City Commission's consideration. Changes made from the original proposal must be submitted and approved through the same process. Any unapproved change from an approved application is not eligible for funding reimbursement. To receive funding, projects must be completed within

six months of being approved. A reasonable extension may be granted by the Planning and Community Development staff, dependent upon the good-faith efforts of the applicant.

## Distribution of Funds

Grant funds will be distributed upon completion of the approved facade improvement project and the following:

- Successful issuance and close-out of all relevant permits, including but not limited to construction, encroachment and sign permits.
- Final inspection and approval of the completed project by the Planning and Community Development Department.
- Photographs, invoices and receipts are submitted to the Department of Planning and Community Development and certified in compliance with the original application.
- Grant recipients agree to place a City of Atlantic Beach Façade Improvement Grant Recipient sign at the construction site throughout the project and 90 days after completion of the project.

Please visit the City's Department of Planning and Community Development website (<https://www.coab.us/808/Department-Projects>) for additional information and an application (<http://coab.us/DocumentCenter/View/10862/25-Facade-Improvement-Program>).