# Program Eligibility

## Refresh Façade Improvement Grant Program

The Downtown Mobile Alliance (DMA) is pleased to launch The Downtown Development District's Refresh Façade Grant program, a façade restoration and storefront improvement grant program. The Refresh Façade Grant supports the revitalization of the Downtown Development District by leveraging private investment with public funds. Eligible projects include high-quality façade improvements to existing structures that will enhance the appearance of retail storefronts, renovate façades, eliminate blight, and address non-conforming design details.

### Façade Improvement activities may include:

- Design Assistance
- Structural Improvements
- Remediate Code Deficiencies
- Window, Storefront, Cornice or Door Repairs and/or Rehabilitation
- Basic Façade Maintenance and Restoration (paint, stucco, brick, stone, etc.)
- Sidewalks, slate pavers, curbs and gutters
- Removal of any non-conforming elements.

For the purpose of this program, eligible expenditures shall include expenses related solely to those activities outlined in the above and/or determined by the Downtown Mobile Alliance.

**Projects must be located within the Henry Aaron loop or inside the ring created by Broad, Beauregard, Canal and Water Streets.**

# Program Eligibility

Through a competitive application process, the Refresh Façade Grant Program will provide financial assistance to property and business owners in the Henry Aaron loop for qualified storefront façade improvements, building code compliance, and, when needed, design assistance. The Program will operate as a matching grant to business and/or property owners aiming to improve exterior elements of their properties. The Program will reimburse up to 50% of the total project costs with remaining 50% paid by the participating business and/or property owner, as determined by the Downtown Mobile Alliance's incentives committee. Program participants will be reimbursed for all approved eligible expenses following the satisfactory completion of the improvement project.

After evaluating submitted applications, the Incentives Committee of the Downtown Alliance will review applications and once a proposal has been selected, the City and the selected grantee will enter into an agreement and a restrictive covenant agreement citing grantee responsibility, including the responsibility to maintain the improved property to International Property Maintenance Standards for a minimum of 5 to 10 years, depending on the size of the grant.

By applying to Refresh Façade for storefront improvements, the applicant is seeking:

1. Funds to be invested in properties along approved corridors that support eligible façade improvement activities;

2. If the applicant is property owner, a copy of the recorded deed, granting the property to the owner.

3. If applicant is not property owner, a copy of a fully-executed lease and Owner Consent Form.

4. Prior to finalizing the grant award, the Downtown Alliance may require disclosure of any liens, mortgages or encumbrances against the property and/or the procurement of a title report.

## Applicant Criteria:

Eligible grant applicants must be:

- Owners of commercial properties, residential properties, or single family residences the improvement of which will meet the objectives of the New Plan for Old Mobile, in the Henry Aaron loop.
- Owners of a small business located along the designated commercial and mixed use corridors.

# Program Eligibility

**All grant applicants must ensure:**

- Property taxes are current.
- All taxes and fees due to the City have been timely paid.
- No other debts or liabilities are owed to the City.
- Legal entities are in compliance with the City of Mobile ordinances and business license requirements.
- Business Improvement District assessments are current.

## Award Limitations:

**Maximum Allowable Award**: Refresh Façade provides a one-time reimbursable grant for eligible façade improvements. The grant's max may be a matching grant. Program awards are not to exceed 50% of project costs, including professional fees, for a maximum matching grant amount of $40,000.

**Example**: The applicant has been approved for a maximum grant with total project expenses equaling $50,000; she/he would be eligible for a $25,000 reimbursement grant. [$50,000 x 50% = $25,000].

The Refresh Façade Grant will not provide any reimbursement to the applicant for additional project expenses above $40,000.

**Minimum Allowable Award:** The Downtown Alliance does not have a minimum amount at this time due to unclear and untested market demand. The Alliance reserves the right to adjust the minimum allowable award amount once the Refresh Façade Grant has launched and gained traction.

# Program Eligibility

## Eligible Activities:

Funds may be used as described below in a list of eligible activities:

### Design Assistance

### Code Remediation:

- Addressing issues with structural integrity within the front wall
- Electrical upgrades
- Water and Sewer upgrades
- Drainage and/or downspout / scupper repair

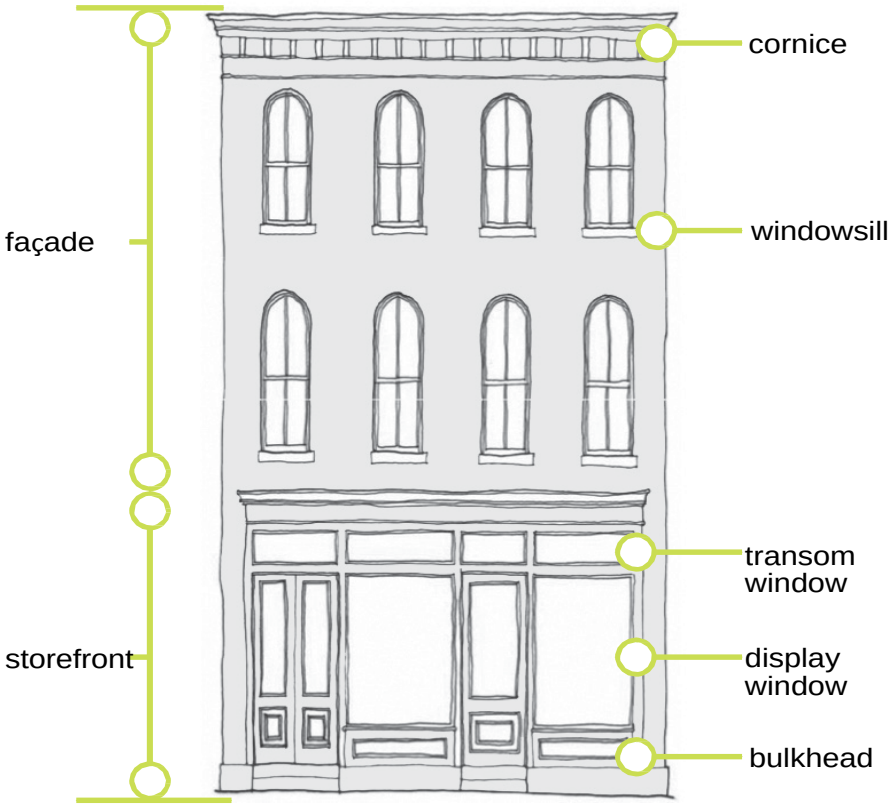
### Façade Improvements:

- Brick re-pointing
- Removal of vinyl or aluminum siding
- Façade restoration and/or repair
- Renovation of covered entrances
- Window restoration
- Renovation of cornices; gutters and downspouts
- Painting

### Storefront Improvements:

- Replacement or installation of signage
- Replacement or installation of new awnings or canopies
- Installation of new exterior lighting
- Storefront window restoration
- Masonry cleaning
- Basic cosmetic work, such as painting
- Sidewalks and paving; LID implementation

# Design Criteria



# Design Criteria continued

## Ineligible Activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Installation of vinyl or aluminum siding
- Interior furnishings
- Non-permanent fixtures
- Business / personal property, equipment and supplies
- Interior lit signs, or interior window coverings
- Upper-story additions to existing buildings
- Billboards
- Security bars
- Razor/barbed wire fencing

**For the purposes of this program:**

Eligible expenditures shall include expenses related solely to improvements as outlined in the program guidelines.

## Guidelines for Buildings:

- All projects receiving funding must meet certain design standards contained within the Mobile Historic Districts Guidelines, if applicable, and Downtown Development District form-based code.

- Prior to commencing any work, the Downtown Mobile Alliance must approve the external components of the grant recipient's project, and possess all applicable permits, as required by the City of Mobile and, when required, the Architectural Review Board and /or the Planning Commission, as well as any other pertinent entity with oversight responsibility.

- All work must be done in accordance with all applicable local and state codes.

# Application Process

**Applicants are encouraged to contact the Downtown Mobile Alliance to review the proposed project prior to submitting a completed application.**

The Downtown Alliance will begin accepting applications on July 1, 2015. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis and subject to funding availability.

E-mail submissions should be addressed to: fred@downtownmobile.org and hard copies should be delivered simultaneously to 261 Dauphin Street Mobile, AL 36602.

Priority will be given to projects that fully support and engage the revitalization of the identified Downtown Development District corridors. Priority will also be given to projects funded with private investment that provides for high-quality improvements which will enhance the appearance of existing retail storefronts, mitigate economic blight and/or address non-conforming design standards.

## All applicants must submit the following information:

- Completed application;
- An application fee of 3% of the grant amount or $600, whichever is lower;
- Photographs of existing façade;
- Measured plans and elevations of proposed improvements;
- List and/or description of materials to be used;
- Detailed cost estimates/bids for proposed improvements from at least two licensed contractors for each type of work to be performed;
- A statement certifying that property taxes are current and no debts or liabilities are owed to the City;
- At least one cost estimate for design services (if applicable);
- If applicant is property owner, Proof of Property Ownership;
- If applicant is not property owner: Owner Consent Form.

# Program Expectations

## Grantee Responsibilities:

Grantees will be responsible for the following:

**1. Project Maintenance:**
Before the project is complete, the Grantee must enter into a maintenance agreement with the City of Mobile to ensure that the improvements are properly maintained and kept in good repair for at least five (5) to ten (10) years depending on the amount of the grant. The specific maintenance services to be provided will be outlined in the agreement but will generally equal or exceed the maintenance standards required by the International Property Maintenance Code.

Projects not completed in a manner consistent with the agreed upon scope for work will be deemed ineligible. The Downtown Mobile Alliance has an obligation to be a careful steward of public funds; therefore, reserves the right to recover grant funds if the improvements are altered, removed, destroyed or not maintained within five (5) to ten (10) years from the date of project completion.

**2. Reimbursement Requirements:**
All grantees must complete, sign and submit a W-9 for the disbursement of funds. Applicants who qualify for funding must document all expenditures and provide the Downtown Development District with proof of payment (receipts, paid invoices, etc.) for all eligible improvements within 30 days of completion.

**3. Promotional Rights:**
All projects will display signage indicating the DDD Refresh Façade Grant program's involvement in the improvement work until the project has been put into service.

**4. Regulatory Approvals:**
The Grantee will be responsible for obtaining necessary regulatory approvals where applicable. All work must comply with city and state regulations. Applicants should contact the Urban Development Department for assistance with permitting.

**5. Project Compliance:**
All work must be completed by licensed and bonded contractors, that legally operate in the City of Mobile. The applicant is responsible for obtaining necessary permits for all work. Applicants are encouraged to hire minority, women-owned, or an emerging small business certified contractor.

# Project Selection Guidelines

Projects selected by the DDD's Incentives Committee will be based on adherence to Refresh Façade Grant Program's principles and design guidelines. The Incentives Committee will use the following guidelines in evaluating proposals:

- Preference for selection will be given to projects that address the following:
    - Rehabilitation of existing properties that demonstrate a high degree of neglect and/or disinvestment;
    - Rehabilitation of long vacant buildings which, if occupied, will contribute to the viability of the Downtown Development District;
    - Projects that advance the goals of the New Plan for Old Mobile;
    - Renovation of existing and occupied structures in order to address deferred maintenance or non-conforming details; or,
    - Rehabilitation that addresses immediate health and safety concerns.

- The committee will give preference to projects that will have the greatest potential to positively impact the health and vitality of the Downtown Development District.

- The committee will assess the applicant's ability to develop and present a complete design concept. The committee reserves the right to require design assistance as a condition of the grant.

- The committee will assess the applicant's ability to complete the proposed project. Applicants will be required to present a project budget and financing plan that outlines how the project will be funded.

- Applicants will be required to show estimates from licensed and bonded contractors. Applicants will be required to submit a copy of their contract with the contractor and proof of payment in order to be reimbursed for the grant.

- Project proposals will only be approved by the committee if applicants consent to signing and filing a restrictive covenant against the property. A restrictive covenant, to be recorded in the public records of Mobile County, will require that all improvements be maintained for a minimum of five years.

- If the application is denied, the applicant may re-apply after meeting with the Alliance to discuss how the application can be improved to meet the goals of the Refresh Façade.

- All approved work must be completed within 9 months of the "program contract."