



Circle Historic Façade Improvement Grant Program

A. Program Overview

Through the Circle Historic Façade Improvement Program, the City of Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency seeks to help improve the overall attractiveness of the Downtown Sebring redevelopment district. The CRA Circle Historic Façade Improvement Grant Program provides property owners with financial assistance to improve the appearance of historic properties located on Circle Park Drive in the Community Redevelopment Area. The purpose of the grant program is to leverage private investment in making significant improvements to building facades in an effort to restore the circle to its original grandeur, which return public benefits such as enhanced corridor aesthetics, improved pedestrian comfort, and public safety.

The Circle Historic Façade Grant's main objectives are as follows:

- Improve the condition and appearance of Downtown commercial buildings
- Encourage commercial and residential development
- Increase Downtown commercial and residential occupancy rates
- Increase Downtown property values
- Promote Downtown Sebring's ongoing revitalization as a place to live, work and play

The Circle Historic Façade Improvement Grant assists qualified property owners with exterior building and improvements to eliminating blighted conditions in the targeted areas of the Sebring CRA. These grant funds may be used for improvements to properties that are not eligible for grant funding from other sources available in the area, or to supplement grant funds awarded by other agencies.

Grant funds will be available for a dollar for dollar reimbursement based on the lowest estimate provided by the applicant to undertake the proposed improvements. Grants will be awarded based on budget availability at the time of the request, and will be awarded and reviewed on a first come, first served basis by the CRA Board. Any and all awards will be granted based on the project parameters, financial need, and catalyst effect to the redevelopment area as deemed appropriate by the CRA board.

Grant funding will be made available as determined by the CRA Board at the start of each fiscal year. Funding for the Circle Historic Façade Improvement Grant will be budgeted annually by the CRA Board. Applications will be accepted throughout the year, and funding will be made available to participants on a case-by-case basis after review and approval from the CRA Board. Once the funds have been expended, the program will close for the remainder of the fiscal year. The CRA Board will evaluate the grant availability for the upcoming fiscal year based on budget availability, and to match the CRA's mission and vision for the future.

Reimbursements will be processed for a completed project once the below have been satisfied:

- CRA Staff has conducted a final inspection of the project to ensure the scope of the improvements matches those approved by the CRA Board
- Applicant has provided printed and digital pictures of the completed project
- The applicant has provided the necessary paperwork to process the reimbursement to the CRA office to include estimates for all approved improvements, copies of the paid invoices for all work completed, and copies of the checks/credit card receipts showing proof of payment

All projects must commence within (90) days of grant award, and be completed within six (6) months from the date the project commences. The applicant will be required to come back before the CRA Board to discuss an updated timeframe on the delinquent project if an extension beyond the 6-month completion date is needed.

B. Program Eligibility

Commercial property whose primary entrance is located on Circle Park Drive is eligible for participation. A property must be current in tax bills and without city liens. The applicant for the project must be the building owner. Applications for projects must exceed a total project cost of \$1,000.00 to be eligible to apply.

Any and all improvements to the exterior of a historic property must first be discussed with the City of Sebring's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for input and approval on the proposed project. Documentation of the HPC's approval must accompany the grant application to be considered. All projects requesting a façade grant funding from the CRA must comply with the Design Guidelines established by the Sebring CRA and the HPC. These guidelines have been adopted by the City Council and are supported by the Historic Preservation Ordinance which governs the actions of the Preservation Commission. The CRA board will not

Changes to the facades of buildings will not remove, alter, damage or cover up significant architectural features of the building which are original or which reflect a major alteration that is itself architecturally coherent, or which help create a unified and attractive appearance to the building and those adjacent to it.

Changes to the facades will either partially or fully restore the appearance of the building based on actual evidence, including photographs, written documentation, data, on the building site or other data or, represent a modern treatment, if appropriate, that blends into and is compatible with the building and those adjacent to it.

In general, repair and preservation of existing structures and facades is encouraged, unless those alterations will result in an incoherent, unattractive or inharmonious appearance.

For facades that have been substantially altered previously, and for which a modern treatment is chosen, such a treatment will conform to the features, materials rhythms, colors and general appearance of the building and those adjacent to it, particularly if the building is in a row of other buildings with identical or similar design.

Any and all exterior improvements proposed for a property on the City's Local Historic Register, or part of the Downtown Historic District, must be approved by the Historic Preservation

Commission prior to applying for grant funds. Only approved projects/improvements will be taken into consideration for grant funding from the CRA. Documentation of the HPC's approval must accompany the grant application.

Paint colors will be based on the original colors obtained from paint samples on the building, or be compatible with adjacent buildings and others located Downtown. Trim colors which highlight building details are encouraged.

Surface cleaning of structures will be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Cleaning methods that damage the historic building materials, particularly sandblasting, shall not be undertaken.

Self-help projects require an estimated cost for the materials to be used to complete the project. The program will not reimburse for labor provided by the applicant.

Eligible improvements include:

Eligible improvements are those found only on the exterior, and no interior improvements or maintenance activities will be eligible for funding.

- Exterior Pressure Washing
- Exterior Painting
- Needed/required surface structure repairs to the exterior of the building in order to be painted
- Exterior Lighting (fixtures only)

C. Application and Evaluation Process

A property owner that is interested in participating in the Circle Historic Façade Improvement Grant must submit a completed and signed application packet to the CRA office in person or electronically. The required supporting documentation must also accompany the application to be considered a complete packet to go before the CRA Board. Applications will be reviewed by staff and if the application meets all required criteria, the applicant will be scheduled to appear before the CRA Board to present their project at the next board meeting.

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Consistency with the goals of the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan
- Potential for project to attract additional businesses and residential interest, and to stimulate the Downtown economy
- Overall scope of the project, and effect on the visual appeal of the redevelopment area upon completion
- Investment level and source of funds from the applicant