

Village of Winthrop Harbor
Department of Economic Development
Business Property Improvement Program

Introduction

The program is intended to encourage the rehabilitation of buildings and structures in the Sheridan Road business corridor to create a cleaner and more attractive environment that encourages new business to locate in the area while increasing customer traffic to existing businesses. Incentives are offered to promote improvement that is physically and architecturally compatible with standards proposed in this document. Assistance is offered to owners and tenants to improve the business properties and business buildings of the Sheridan Road corridor.

Grants offered will apply as follows; Tenant / property owner agrees to fund 25% of the project's total cost. The grant will cover up to \$2,000 of the cost over and above the tenant / owner's 25% and will apply to the front of the building. Corner buildings on major streets may at the discretion of the Design Review Committee and Village Board of Trustees be eligible for an additional \$2,000 for the side of the building. Grants will be paid when the agreed upon work is 100% complete and upon review of the Design Review Committee and approval by the Village Board of Trustees. Permit fees for any approved project under this program will be waived.

Funding for this program will be \$10,000 per Village of Winthrop Harbor fiscal year beginning June 1, 2007 and will run for 5 years. Yearly funding will not be available until approved by the Village Board as a part of the Annual Budget approval process. Applications for funding will not be made available until annual funding is approved and will be considered at the discretion of the Village Board and the Design Review Committee.

The Design Review Committee will consist of from 3 to 6 members comprised of 2 members of the Economic Development Commission, the Director of Economic Development, and may include The Building / Planning and Zoning Administrator and 2 or 3 others with a background in the following; contracting / construction, design, real estate, as well as an interested member of the community.

Program Eligibility and Requirements

The planned rehabilitation must further the goals and meet the standards set forth in the “Rehabilitation Standards and Design Guidelines” (next section). Any person, corporation, or partnership may be eligible for the grant, irrespective of race, color, religion, age, national origin, or gender as follows:

- 1) Owners and /or tenants of commercial buildings within the boundaries of the Sheridan Road business corridor as defined by the following:

All commercial buildings whose property borders Sheridan Road from 1st Street north to 15th Street south and all commercial buildings whose property borders 7th Street from Whitney Avenue west to Landon Avenue east

- 2) All Village of Winthrop Harbor volunteers, committee and board members are eligible to apply for program funds.
- 3) An owner or tenant of multiple buildings may apply for each building.
- 4) Tenants who received written permission to pursue an improvement project from the building owner and where all other provisions herewith are met.
- 5) Owners who pursue tasteful exterior improvements of their properties.

A building may be eligible for incentive funds based on the scope of work and available funds. The following criteria apply:

- 1) Grants offered will be up to \$2,000 per applicant for the front of the building. Corner buildings on major streets may at the discretion of the Review Committee and Village Board be eligible for an additional \$2,000 for that side of the building.
- 2) Permit fees for any approved project under this program will be waived.
- 3) Tenant / property owner agrees to fund a minimum of 25% of the project cost. The grant will cover up to \$2,000 of the cost over and above the tenant/ property owner's 25%. This will apply to all costs with the exception of a trash receptacle which may be included within the \$2,000, exempt of the tenant / property owners 25%.
- 4) Only buildings with retail, commercial or professional uses consistent with desired land uses are eligible.
- 5) Only facades abutting public rights-of-way are eligible projects.

- 6) Applicants will be required to complete an application form available at the Village Hall prior to approval and grant awards.
- 7) The project must not begin until the approval process is complete. Otherwise, the project will not be eligible for funding.
- 8) No funds will be dispersed until the project is 100% complete and satisfies the Village approval process where applicable. Obtaining all required governmental permits is the responsibility of the applicant.
- 9) Any building that has been awarded a grant is not eligible for a second grant until after a 3 year waiting period. This requirement will be waived in the case of an applicant who has previously applied for and received a grant for a trash receptacle only.
- 10) Regarding a contiguous building with more than one business; if an applicant representing a business is approved, then future applicants must conform to the same design concept as the first applicant.
- 11) Awnings are eligible expenses under the program guidelines. Funding will be granted as follows:

Awnings must be located on those sides of the building that face a street.

Awnings must be of durable material and construction and have a life expectancy of at least five years.

- 12) Placement of a Trash receptacle of quality and durable construction for public use on the outside of the property will be considered an eligible expense. Property owner and tenant agree to empty and maintain in good order said receptacle at all times.
- 13) Landscape enhancements such as flower boxes, planters and raised beds located adjacent to the front or side of the building or parking areas (not to include the cost of plant material or watering devices) will be considered eligible. Such enhancements must be constructed of durable and long lasting materials suitable to withstand the elements year round. Property owner and tenant agree to maintain plantings in season.
- 14) Signage or other marketing/ promotion costs are not eligible under this program.
- 15) All improvements that have been awarded grants from the Business Property Improvement Program must remain with the property.

- 16) Approved tenants / property owners must complete the work and submit an invoice for reimbursement of costs to the Village no later than April 30 of the fiscal year in which the grant was approved. This will apply to all approved grants for the current fiscal year as well as future grants.

- 17) Program funds may not be utilized for any of the following:
 - * Refinancing existing debt
 - * Property acquisition
 - * Interior improvements or furnishings
 - * Building or sign permit fees
 - * Property appraisal costs, legal fees or loan origination fees
 - * Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant or relatives of the owner/applicant, unless otherwise approved

- 18) Failure to abide by the grant terms and conditions or to meet the deadlines indicated will result in forfeiture of the program's funding.

Final approval for all grant monies will be at the sole discretion of the Village of Winthrop Harbor Board of Trustees.