

**CITY OF NEW LONDON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (CDBG)**

**SOUTH WATER STREET FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM**

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

**PREPARED AND ADMINISTERED BY:
THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING**

Revised to May 25, 2010

SOUTH WATER STREET FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the South Water Street Façade Improvement Program is to foster and implement the recommendations of the 1989 RUDAT report and the 1991 Downtown Design Guidebook. This program, first started on July 1, 2000, is specifically designed for only those properties that front on South Water Street. Quoting from the Downtown Design Guidebook, the objective of the South Water Street restoration “is to turn around the City to face the water by creating a new ‘maritime’ street south of Bank Street...South Water Street will help underscore New London’s maritime identity by forging a direct link between downtown and the water.” This aspect of the Program is particularly significant when matched with the creation of the downtown waterfront park. “Where State Street should be redolent of the history and dignity of a traditional historic ‘Main Street’, South Water Street should be quirky, colorful, and relaxed. Here, one would hope to see a variety of awnings (bright blue the dominant color), flags, interesting nautically-themed signs, terrace dining structures, balconies, and windows. In short, South Water Street should have character. It should be a waterfront place, suggestive of the waterfront’s colorful past as a bustling center of maritime trade.”

ADMINISTRATION

The South Water Street Façade Improvement Program will be administered by the Office of Development and Planning. The Façade Review Committee will determine eligibility for admittance to the program and approve all design plans. The Façade Review Committee shall include the Assistant Director of the Office of Development and Planning, the City Planner, a City Building Inspector, a member each from the City Center District, New London Main Street, and the Historic District Commission. In addition, a New London architect and a building contractor will also be members of the Review Committee. The New London Economic Development Coordinator will act as an alternate.

Improvements using these funds will be made in accordance with the Secretary of Interior’s Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and in accordance with the City’s Memorandum of Agreement between the City, the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council in Washington, D.C.

II. PROGRAM AND TERMS

The program will provide up to a maximum of \$15,000 per single principal building fronting on South Water Street. Funding will be in the form of a grant and may only be used for exterior improvements to the facades of these buildings. Where appropriate, exceptions may be granted to the *façade only restriction* in

order to provide improvements to buildings facing open spaces. The recipient of said funds will be required to match the approved grant amount with equal funds of their own, making this a 50-50 project.

This is a reimbursable funding program. Approved grant amounts will be provided to the applicant only after all work has been completed and all services and materials have been paid for.

III. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

All applications shall be processed at the Office of Development and Planning. Eligible applications shall be reviewed by the Façade Review Committee in accordance with the Program Objectives and Priorities as outlined below:

- A. The Program is specifically aimed toward those buildings that front on South Water Street. Highest priority shall be given to those projects that have high visible impact.
- B. The objective of the Program is to transform South Water Street into a more inviting and appealing place, by restoring and rehabilitating the facades of those buildings facing the street.
- C. Priority will be given to those improvement proposals that most improve the attractiveness of the building and increase visual interest.
- D. Priority will be given to proposals that are consistent with the guidelines found in the Downtown Design Guidebook, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, Office of Development and Planning Sign Design Guidelines, and the New London Zoning Regulations.

IV. ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Matching grants up to \$15,000.00 are available to any owners of property fronting on South Water Street. All applicants must meet eligibility requirements.

Eligible improvements shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1. Exterior painting, repointing, cleaning
- 2. Replacement of original architectural details
- 3. Replacement of architectural elements which have structural problems
- 4. Addition and/or replacement of awnings
- 5. Installation of new signage
- 6. Replacement of window and window framing of façade/storefront
- 7. Installation of terrace dining structures, and decks

V. APPLICANT AND PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

- A. Applicants must be individual property owners, including partnerships and corporations, owning property located on South Water Street or having a building façade that faces South Water Street.
- B. Each applicant is eligible for only one grant, up to a maximum of \$15,000.
- C. All applicants must have all real estate and personal property taxes due to the City of New London paid in full.
- D. No owner may be delinquent in the payment of any City taxes. In the case of multiple owners with several properties, taxes must be current on all properties owned by every owner including taxes on motor vehicles and/or personal property.
- E. No applicant can be involved in litigation brought by the City of New London or against the City of New London.
- F. Applicants who have outstanding loans through the Revolving Loan Fund Program or similar City loan programs shall be paid-up to the date of application submitted. And, further, shall be paid-up (current) after completion of the project and at the time a request for reimbursement is made.
- G. No applicant shall be eligible if they have been cited for existing zoning, building or property maintenance code violations.
- H. Applicants whose building façades do not meet the current Zoning Regulations for signs, Section 615, are not eligible for funding until corrections are made to bring the non-conformity into conformance. Signs for existing businesses that have building and/or zoning permits on file are exempted.
- I. Applicants who have outstanding water and sewer bills for any properties located in the City of New London are not eligible unless a payment plan has been established with the Public Utilities department.
- J. All applicants must be current in their City Center District taxes.

VI. PROCEDURE

- A. Complete the South Water Street Façade Improvement Program Application and submit it with all the required application materials to the Office of Development and Planning. Because funding is limited, processing of applications will be on a "first come first serve". All applications must be complete to be considered for review. Completed applications will be eligible for review and approval as long as funds are available but in no case will applications be accepted after June 1, 2011.
- B. Completed applications will be reviewed by the Façade Review Committee to determine eligibility and approval under the design guidelines and based upon established priorities. The Façade Review Committee shall have complete authority in determining the appropriateness of any proposed color treatments, for such things as façade walls, signs, and awnings.

- C. Projects approved by the Review Committee will be issued a *conditional approval*. The applicant must then obtain the required zoning and building permits, and submit copies of the permits to the Program Coordinator.
- D. Upon final approval of the application the applicant is required to complete and sign all necessary South Water Street Facade Improvement Agreements and/or Contracts.
- E. Upon completion of the improvement project the applicant must submit to the Office of Development and Planning a South Water Street Façade Improvement Completed and Request for Reimbursement Form. Said form shall be submitted no later than May 15, 2011.
- F. Upon verification that all improvements as proposed have been completed and all services and materials involved in the project have been paid in full, the applicant will be approved for reimbursement.

VII. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- A. If necessary, the Façade Review Committee may require applicants to submit precise improvement costs. All costs must be accounted for and must be reasonable in terms of current labor changes and material costs. The facade improvement grant amount approved by the Façade Review Committee cannot be increased unless a change order is approved by the Program Coordinator and/or Façade Review Committee.
- B. Changes in improvement projects due to unanticipated but necessary additional work must be reviewed by the Program Coordinator and, if determined to be significant, by the Façade Review Committee. Cost overruns due to such unanticipated work may not be eligible for additional funds. And in no case shall the amount of the grant exceed \$15,000.00.
- C. The storefront and/or façade must be visible from a public way.
 - 1. A storefront is that portion of the ground floor building front occupied by a use which is separate from the adjoining buildings and at which a major entrance is located.
 - 2. A façade is the separate face of the building including parapet walls and facing a city street or a vacant lot or a municipal parking lot.
 - 3. A project shall be complete when all the work as proposed has been verified as complete and all costs associated with the work has been verified as paid in full.
- D. The applicant and owner of the property agree upon executing an agreement with the City of New London, to indemnify and hold harmless the members of Façade Review Committee, the City of New London, the Office of Development and Planning and its employees, contractors and agents against any claims, suits, liabilities or judgments for injury or injuries to persons, injury or destruction to owner's building(s), grounds or adjacent building(s) or grounds, loss to or interruption of the business or

commence of the owner, applicant, and/or the owner's tenants or agents due to work performed under said agreement.

- E. The Façade Review Committee will have great latitude over administering each project as to work to be done. The highest priority of this program is to maximize visual impact.
- F. An applicant may appeal decisions of the Façade Review Committee for the applicant's project only. Appeals of the decisions of the Façade Review Committee shall be taken to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- G. Owners and grantees must abide by all CDBG and other funding source requirements as well as City purchasing regulations.

VIII. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, TRAINING AND LOCAL BUSINESS AND BIDDING PROVISIONS

Equal Opportunity Provisions

Attention to all applicants is particularly called to the requirement for ensuring that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, color religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, ancestry, mental retardation or physical disability, including but not limited to blindness, unless it is shown by the applicant that such disability prevents performance of the work involved. Additionally, it is encouraged that the applicant will make a good faith effort to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractor and suppliers of materials on Façade Improvement Program projects.

Training and Local Business Provisions

Attention of applicants is also particularly called to the requirement for ensuring that, to the greatest extent feasible, in connection with work covered, opportunities for training and employment be made available to lower income residents of the Project area. Additionally, it is encouraged that every effort is made to retain vendors and contractors which have their major business interest located in the City of New London.

Bidding Provisions

For all projects in excess of \$2,000, **written specifications** for the project are required, and all projects are subject to full and open competitive bidding. A **public advertisement** seeking bids for the project is required. A minimum of **three bids** is generally required. Specifications, bids, and copies of advertisements must be **submitted to the program coordinator**. The contract for work must be awarded to the **lowest responsible bidder**. Exceptions to this last requirement are permitted under special circumstances. Awarding of the contract for project work is generally **subject to review and approval by the Façade Review Committee**.

**IX. CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN EXCESS OF \$2000
DAVIS-BACON and OTHER LABOR LAWS**

The City's matching funds for the South Water Street Façade Improvement Program are provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The Davis-Bacon Act requires the payment of prevailing wage rates (which are determined by the U.S. Department of Labor) to all laborers and mechanics performing work on construction projects in excess of \$2000 that receive funding **assistance** from HUD sponsored programs. Construction includes alteration and/or repair, including painting and decorating, of public buildings or public works.

All applicants (and their contractors) for grants under the South Water Street Façade Improvement Program should be knowledgeable of the labor laws associated with this program. Information about these laws is available in HUD's publication *A Contractor's Guide to Prevailing Wage Requirements for Federally-Assisted Construction Projects* available at the Office of Development and Planning.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETING

All contractors awarded work for this program **must** meet with the City of New London Community Development Division **prior** to beginning any work. To contact the Community Development Division for information or a meeting please call:

Cara Pianka
Community Development / Lead Coordinator
Office of Development and Planning
111 Union Street
New London, CT 06320
(860) 437-6392
cpianka@ci.new-london.ct.us