

# Swiss Bear, Inc.

## Property Enhancement Grants

### Description of Property Enhancement Grant Categories

**Façade** – defined as one side of a building regardless of the number of stories. Each storefront of a building can be considered a façade. The rear and side of the building may also be considered a façade, with priority given to the front of the building. Awnings are covered under façade.

**Signage** – includes both exterior signs and vinyl window decals

**Landscape** – includes foundation and container plantings, as well as private walkways

### Purpose of the Program

The Swiss Bear Property Enhancement Grant is an incentive-based measure. It is intended to encourage and provide an economic incentive for the renovation of building facades in Greater Downtown New Bern (Main Street footprint), provide implementation of appropriate design standards for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and provide a visible contribution to the Greater Downtown New Bern commercial district by displaying good design and using quality materials.

Examples of exterior improvements include:

- Removing false fronts and architecturally inappropriate features such as metal canopies
- Safe cleaning of brick and stone fronts
- Sign replacements
- Installation or replacement of damaged canvas awnings. Damage does not include lack of upkeep (cleaning). We recommend cleaning as a first step prior to replacement. If you need recommendations for a cleaning professional, please contact us. 252-288-9825.
- Window and door repairs,
- Repainting (but not routine maintenance)
- Structural repair
- Historic reconstructions
- Landscaping including walkways and plantings
- Replacing or adding address information

## Who is eligible?

- Any **existing** commercial property owner or business owner in the Main Street footprint is eligible to apply for pre-approval of funding for future improvements.
- Any **new** commercial property or business owner in the Main Street footprint is eligible to apply for consideration of recent improvements (within 12 months) or pre-approval of future improvements. *However, any new business will not receive approval or funding until after the business has officially opened to the public.*
- Government facilities and private dwellings are excluded from consideration.
- Either the property owner or the business owner may submit an application. If the business owner is a tenant, the property owner must provide written consent with his or her signature giving explicit permission for the property enhancement to be completed. The property owner should also attach any provisions for renovations undertaken.

## Criteria:

- All grant application proposals must meet zoning and code requirements of the City of New Bern and must comply with Property Enhancement Grant guidelines and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) guidelines where applicable.
- Only exterior façade renovations are eligible for consideration under the Property Enhancement Grant program. The costs of limited interior alterations such as display window changes may be included only if they are a necessary part of the façade design.
- Priority consideration will be given to proposals that make highly visible and significant design contributions, and which contribute to the program goal of preserving the architectural, historic and commercial character of Greater Downtown.
- A property does not have to be occupied at the time a Property Enhancement Grant application is submitted.

## Funding:

- Property Enhancement Grant *funding categories*
  - **Façade** – a maximum of \$2500 or half (1/2) the cost of the project, whichever is less.  
Example (1): \$2000 project, a maximum \$1000 grant. Example 2: \$10,000 project, a maximum \$2500 grant
  - **Signage** – a maximum of \$750 or half (1/2) the cost of the project, whichever is less

- **Landscape** – a maximum of \$500 or half (1/2) the cost of the project, whichever is less
- Property Enhancement Grants will provide a 1:1 dollar match for approved projects up to the category limit (s). No other grants can be used for the match.
- Grant amounts are limited to the amount of the grant category and will not exceed the amount of the estimate submitted with the grant application.
- Grants are paid only when the approved project is completed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted with the proposal.
- The final award amount is based on the documentation submitted of actual costs, up to the amount that was awarded.
- A project that alters submitted plans without prior approval will be disqualified for payment. Designs not completed as submitted will also be disqualified.

### **Approval:**

- Where appropriate, the project should follow the “Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation” of commercial buildings (see attached.)
- All applicants’ design proposals must meet the building code requirements for the City of New Bern.
- An applicant may apply for multiple categories, however an applicant will not be considered for funding for the same or similar project on the same building for a minimum of five (5) years.
- All applicants must obtain two cost estimates for labor and materials and provide copies of each estimate with the application.
- Applications can be submitted on a rolling basis for consideration

### **Post-approval:**

- Applicants, after approval, have up to 120 days to start their projects. Projects should be completed within 12 months from the time the application is approved.
- If the applicant needs more time to start or complete their project, a written statement with a reasonable explanation for the extension must be submitted and approved.
- The business or property owner (depending on who paid for the project) will receive reimbursement once the project(s) is completed, deemed consistent with the submitted project proposal, and approved by the building inspector, if applicable.
- Payment of the grant is contingent upon proof provided of the expenditures and payment thereof.

**Swiss Bear, Inc.**  
**Property Enhancement Grants**

**Type of application (check all that apply):**

Facade                       Signage                       Landscape

**Information**

Property owner name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business owner name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Use of Building**

Current use of building: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed use of building: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of proposed enhancement (attach or email drawing, sketch, or photo specifically identifying changes and paint color for each detail of the enhancement along with a photo of the building in its current condition): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total estimated cost of enhancement (**attach 2 estimates**): \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated project completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Checklist for completed application:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the Property Enhancement Grant documentation and fully understand the agreement

\_\_\_\_\_ I have submitted a letter with the building owner's permission and signature, if applicable

\_\_\_\_\_ I have complied with the Secretary of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, where applicable

\_\_\_\_\_ I have submitted drawings, sketches and/or photos, including color scheme

\_\_\_\_\_ I have submitted a photo of the building in its current condition

\_\_\_\_\_ I have submitted two (2) estimates for the proposed project

\_\_\_\_\_ I have written approval from HPC or have submitted an application to HPC for the project, where applicable. I understand that the Property Enhancement Grant cannot be fully approved until written approval is received from HPC

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to hold Swiss Bear, Inc. harmless of any defects in workmanship, liability, damages or other costs associated with this project

Applicant signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Building owner signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>For Office Use Only</b>	
Date received:	_____
Date reviewed – staff:	_____
Date reviewed – committee:	_____
Date reviewed board (if applicable):	_____
Action taken:	Approved _____ Not Approved _____
Executive Director:	_____ Date: _____

Initially developed by the Secretary of the Interior to determine the appropriateness of proposed project work on registered properties within the Historic Preservation Fund grant-in-aid program, the **Standards for Rehabilitation** have been widely used over the years—particularly to determine if rehabilitation qualifies as a Certified Rehabilitation for Federal tax purposes. In addition, the Standards have guided Federal agencies in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities for properties in Federal ownership or control; and State and local officials in reviewing both Federal and nonfederal rehabilitation proposals. They have also been adopted by historic district and planning commissions across the country.

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historical purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

For more information on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, check-out:  
<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps>