



Building A Better Long Beach

December 15, 2008

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Amend language in the Redevelopment Agency's Commercial Facade Improvement Program for use in the Central, Downtown, North Long Beach and West Long Beach Industrial Redevelopment Project Areas. (Districts 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9)

DISCUSSION

On September 18, 2006 the Redevelopment Agency (Agency) adopted an amendment to the Commercial Facade Improvement Program (CFIP) to improve and rehabilitate commercial building facades in the Central, Downtown, North Long Beach and West Long Beach Industrial Redevelopment Project Areas (Exhibit A). Since that time, Agency staff has completed approximately six facade projects for a total cost of \$412,834. An additional 26 projects are being considered or are underway. The impact of a new facade on adjacent properties and along a commercial corridor is tremendous, and additional private investment has occurred when a facade project is implemented. However, because of the current downturn in the economy, participation in the program has tapered off significantly.

In an effort to assist property owners and business tenants affected by the significant downturn in the economy and continue to keep the CFIP attractive to our business community, staff recommends that the CFIP be modified as follows: revise the language to ensure site access is granted to contractors; expand eligible improvements to increase the opportunity to upgrade building facades and adjacent areas within the property with street frontage; and reduce owner participation from 25% to 15%. All other aspects of the CFIP will remain as currently structured.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Adopt recommendation.

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS

December 15, 2008

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Respectfully submitted,



CRAIG BECK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CB:AJB:DAC

Attachment: Exhibit A – Commercial Facade Improvement Program Summary

Exhibit A

COMMERCIAL FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

SUMMARY

CITY OF LONG BEACH
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



Building A Better Long Beach

333 West Ocean Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 570-6615

Adopted February 11, 2002
Amended May 13, 2002
Amended September 18, 2006
Amended December 15, 2008

COMMERCIAL FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY

(Adopted February 11, 2002, Amended May 13, 2002, September 18, 2006, December 15, 2008)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of Long Beach has established the Commercial Facade Improvement Program (CFIP) to assist in the revitalization of targeted commercial building facades within the Redevelopment Project Areas. This will be achieved through matching grants to commercial property owners or tenants of approved sites, from one building to strip commercial centers. Program participants are required to invest matching funds of 15% of project costs.

City staff in the Development Services Department's Redevelopment Agency will administer the CFIP. The City may provide design and construction services necessary for the renovation of commercial facades. Funding will be provided by the Redevelopment Agency and will be subject to annual funding availability within the respective Project Area. The Redevelopment Agency share of matching funds per application will be budgeted up to \$180,000 or \$1,800 per linear foot of building frontage, based on funding availability.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the CFIP is to improve and rehabilitate commercial building facades. This effort is expected to upgrade and strengthen commercial areas, to provide a stimulus for shoppers to increase utilization of the area, and/or increase business attraction and retention.

Program funds may be used for exterior improvements, including paint, refacing, signage, landscaping and lighting. In addition, the program offers free architectural assistance. Parking lot improvements with landscaping may also be considered.

PROGRAM SCOPE

The CFIP shall focus on facades of buildings, open areas adjacent to buildings and parking areas. Treatments for open areas between buildings (e.g. vacant lots, alleys) will be addressed as they pertain to the overall appearance and safety of the project. The goal is to improve the overall appearance and safety of the property and area. The CFIP is not intended to independently construct new structural elements or perform such tasks as re-roofing, unless such work is minor in nature and is necessitated by the originally specified facade improvement design.

In the case of commercial buildings that are located on corner parcels, every effort will be made so that all the facades facing streets will be improved as part of the program. No residential structure facade shall be eligible for funding unless clearly visible from the street upon which the commercial facade fronts, and is structurally tied to a commercial structure, as in the case of residential units situated above commercially-used property. First time buildings/projects within targeted sites will be given funding priority.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The CFIP is available to targeted properties located within Redevelopment Project Areas. If requested by the program participant, City staff will select an architect to prepare building and site improvement plans. During the design phase of the CFIP, building owners and/or tenants may be required to review and approve the designs in progress provided by the City's selected architect. During the construction phase of the CFIP, the building owners and/or tenants will be required to execute a Right of Entry form to allow a contractor hired by the City to enter their premises to make improvements.

The property owner will also be required to record maintenance covenants against the property binding the owner and any future owners and tenants to maintain any improvements for a period of five years. The agreement will require that facades and signs be cleaned on a regular basis. Owners and tenants will be required to comply with all applicable federal, state and local governmental codes and regulations.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR TARGETED PROPERTIES

Selection criteria to target properties will be based on several factors including, but not limited to: properties must be within close proximity of other Agency activity or new private development; be located on major commercial corridors; be in obvious blighted condition; Any City related staff, Board or Project Area Committee (PAC) can nominate sites to be targeted.

Upon identifying properties that warrant commercial façade improvements, Agency staff will initiate contact with the property owners to assess their interest in participating in the CFIP. Projects may be subject to review by the PAC.

The property owner or tenant may invest matching funds of 15% to 25% per project. At the sole discretion of the City, the City may solicit bids, select a contractor to do the work, and manage the project on behalf of the owner/tenant. The funds allocated for such project will be determined based upon the bids received. Construction funds may be released through an escrow account subject to Agency approval. Alternatively, Agency funding for this program may be provided as a rebate to the owner/tenant after work is completed to the satisfaction of the Agency.