

## **Priority Corridors Grant Program**

The Priority Corridors Grant Program is aimed at encouraging and assisting existing businesses and property owners within the Maple Avenue Corridor, Webb Avenue Corridor, and North Church Street Corridor to restore and improve the interior and exterior of their businesses.

The Priority Corridors Grant program is designed to encourage private, non-residential investment that enhances the visual aesthetics of the City's Priority Corridors, leading to investment and increased property values. The program further aims to stimulate economic development through financial incentives to existing business owners to ensure business sustainability and to create aesthetically pleasing areas to attract new businesses and consumers.

The two grants – the Façade Improvement Grant and the Interior Upfit Grant – can be used separately or in combination by businesses and property owners located in the City of Burlington's Priority Corridors to offset the cost of improving their properties.

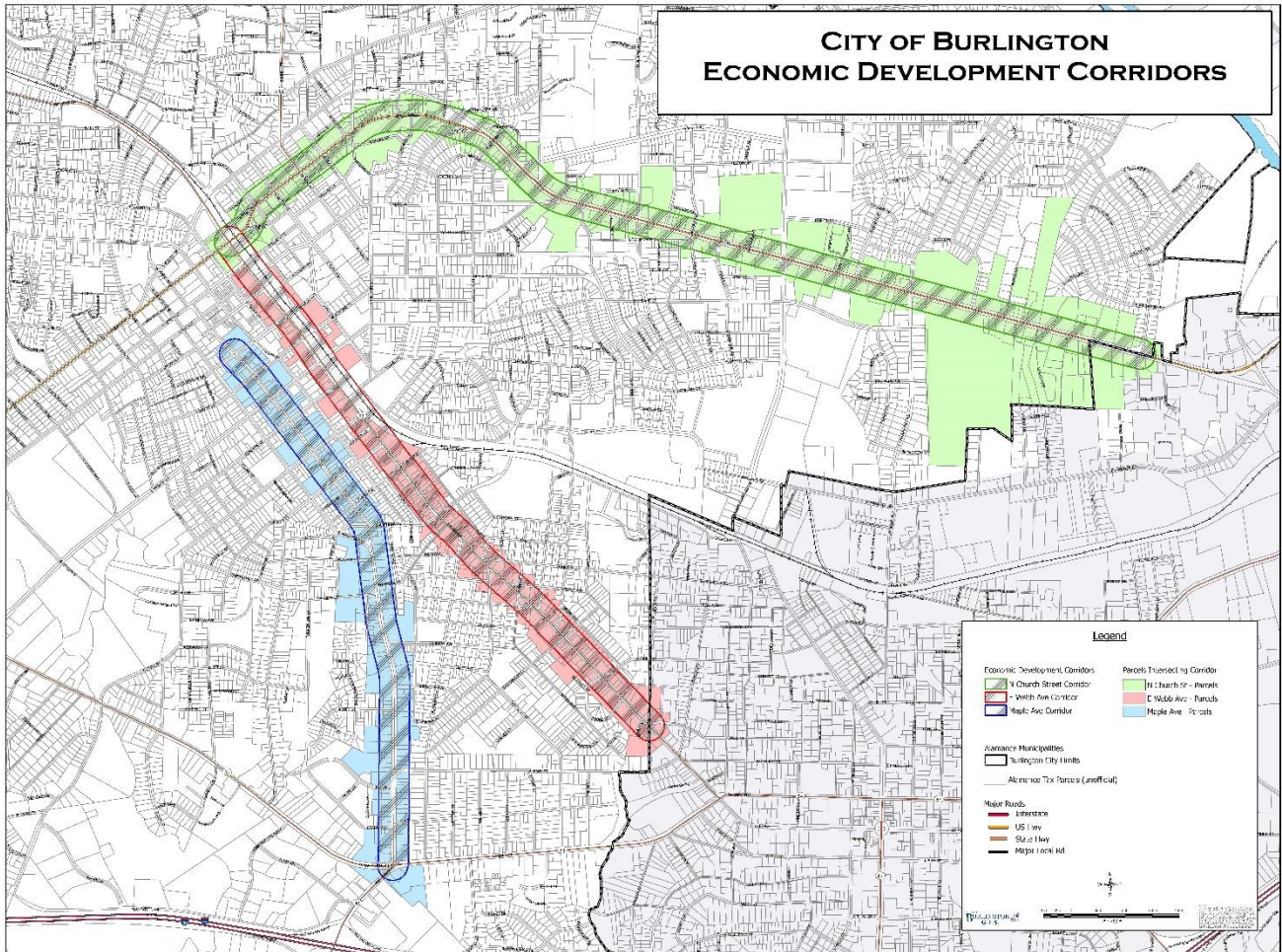
Façade Improvement Grants assist business and commercial property owners as they improve a building's exterior appearance. This program helps with exterior architectural renovations and targeted site improvements. Interior Upfit Improvement Grants reimburse commercial and industrial businesses or property owners for eligible interior renovation costs.

These programs are structured as a 50-50 matching program up to \$30,000, with the amount requested for interior and exterior projects specified accordingly. Projects that request more than \$30,000 along the specified Corridors will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Priority Corridor Grants Review Committee.

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- To encourage private, non-residential investment that enhances the visual aesthetics of Burlington's Priority Corridors and leads to increased property values.
- To stimulate economic development through financial incentives to existing business owners to ensure business sustainability and to create aesthetically pleasing areas to attract new businesses and consumers.
- To preserve and beautify the Priority Corridors.

**MAP OF ELIGIBLE CORRIDORS**



## GRANT DISBURSEMENT

The Façade Improvement Grant Program and Interior Upfit Grant Program each offer a 50% match of project expenses up to \$30,000. The minimum total project cost is \$5,000.00. For example:

- Expenses of \$5,000 for Façade → Granted \$2,500.00; \$2,500.00 Tenant/Owner Contribution
- Expenses of \$7,000 for Interior Upfit → Granted \$3,500.00; \$3,500.00 Tenant/Owner Contribution
- Expenses of \$10,000 → Granted \$5,000.00; \$5,000.00 Tenant/Owner Contribution

If both the Façade Improvement and the Interior Upfit Grants are requested by a single applicant, the 50% match of project expenses will total up to \$30,000, but can be designated according to the business/property owner's needs. For example:

- Expenses of \$5,000 for Façade, \$5,000 for Interior Upfit → Granted \$2,500 for Façade and \$2,500 for Interior Upfit; \$5,000 Tenant/Owner Contribution
- Expenses of \$8,000 for Façade, \$7,000 for Interior Upfit → Granted \$4,000 for Façade and \$3,500 for Interior Upfit; \$7,500 Tenant/Owner Contribution
- Expenses of \$10,000 for Façade, \$20,000 for Interior Upfit → Granted \$5,000 for Façade and \$10,000 for Interior Upfit; \$15,000 Tenant/Owner Contribution

Grants are available on a first come, first served basis to eligible program participants that have an average of 25 points on the Score Sheet. Funds will be disbursed directly to the contractor once the project has been completed and all paperwork has been completed. Applicants can request up to \$30,000 in any selection or combination of facade and upfit projects.

**\*APPLICATIONS WILL BE RECEIVED ON A QUARTERLY BASIS UNTIL ALL FUNDS ARE AWARDED  
(\$300,000 ANNUAL TOTAL FOR 3 YEARS )\***

## ELIGIBLE APPLIANTS

The Priority Corridor Improvement Program assists commercial property owners and/or commercial tenants with improvements and renovations to the interior and exterior of the business. Eligible applicants include:

- **Owners (or tenants) of for-profit commercial buildings. Use of the building must conform to all current codes and ordinances; non-conforming uses of any kind are not allowed.**
- **Owners of vacant buildings shall be eligible if the owner's purpose is to rehabilitate the structure to attract eligible businesses.**
- **Prohibited businesses include new construction projects, businesses operating from residential property or residential uses, property owned by non-profit entities, any non-conforming uses, and owners with current building or development code violations.**
- **Portions of buildings occupied by ineligible businesses of any kind are ineligible for program funds.**
- **Owners and tenants are eligible to re-apply until the maximum award is reached.**
- **All real property and other taxes must be paid in full**

### **ELIGIBLE EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS**

City staff may work with the applicant to include other elements to achieve a more comprehensive improvement/benefit for the corridor. Please note that improvements must have a life expectancy of a minimum of 5 years. Façade improvements include, but are not limited to:

- **Repairs, restoration, and/or re-painting of building storefront and exteriors**
- **Roof repair or replacement**
- **Beautification components, such as murals and public art**
- **Building signage as per code/overlay requirements**
- **Exterior lighting for facades and signage**
- **Awning/canopy installation or repair**
- **Restoration of architectural details that highlights the building's historic nature, such as wood and masonry repairs, appropriate cleaning of brick, etc.**
- **Front door and impact window replacement**
- **Code violations related to the exterior of the building**
- **Demolition of non-conforming signs**
- **Landscaping on a case-by-case basis**

As a note, eligible buildings will have an existing commercial or industrial occupancy. If more than one freestanding building exists on the property, each building that contains a separate business and meets the requirements listed is eligible for the grant.

### **ELIGIBLE INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS:**

Interior upfit improvements assist commercial property owners and/or commercial tenants with improvements and renovations to the interior of the business for overall revitalization. Interior upfit improvements include, but are not limited to:

- **Remodeling and upgrading interior mechanical, electrical, and/or plumbing**
- **HVAC, fire suppression**
- **Flooring**
- **Interior lighting**
- **Utility upgrades**
- **Removal, repair, and/or installation of interior walls**

### **INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS:**

The following are not eligible improvements for either program:

- **Refinancing existing debts, working capital, non-capital equipment, payroll and inventory**
- **Business personal property, such as fixtures that can be physically removed by a business**
- **General maintenance and operation costs**
- **Emergency building repairs**
- **Billboards**
- **Work that principally involves routine maintenance, such as window cleaning**
- **Other work deemed inconsistent with the program objectives or Priority Corridor Plan as determined by The Priority Corridor Grants Review Committee**

## **THE PROCESS**

*Applications must be submitted before the project begins.* Applications are reviewed and approved by the Façade Improvement Program Committee. This review process takes approximately 30-45 days after the application has been submitted.

During the processing time, application documentation will be verified, as well as area eligibility verified. Each project will be scored by each Façade Improvement Program Committee member. In order to be selected, the project must have an average minimum score of 25. The scoring rubric focuses on the visibility, design and permanence of the improvements proposed by the applicant.

Once approved, the owner/tenant, contractor and Economic Development staff will have a pre-construction meeting. During this meeting, the scope of work will be verified and a contract/ promissory note will be signed. Additionally, the contractor will sign a Notice To Proceed, detailing the approximate start and end dates. Projects that require a rezoning, Technical Review Committee approval, or zoning permit will be required to obtain these entitlements before or contemporaneously with the corridor grant process.

Contractors will be paid by the City of Burlington upon completion of the work and submission of all final paperwork. All work must be performed by a licensed general contractor where necessary, permitted/inspected, and completed within 180 working days of the application's approval. If the work is unable to be completed within the designated time frame, a written request must be submitted to the Economic Development Department prior to the expiration of the 180 working days time frame.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Applications can be filled out online at:

<https://www.burlingtonnc.gov/2184/Priority-Corridors-Grant-Program>

Or, you may contact the Economic Development office, at 336-222-5147 or [pbishop@burlingtonnc.gov](mailto:pbishop@burlingtonnc.gov) to have an application mailed to you.

## **PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Following approval by the City of Burlington, the applicant will be responsible for securing estimates for all work to be completed under the project. Prospective estimates should contain a copy of the approved design details/construction drawings, detailed construction specifications. A minimum of two estimates is required for all work to be completed. Estimates should be broken down by line item in accordance with the approved construction specifications.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

Members of the City of Burlington’s Planning Department will review each project application prior to approval to ensure the project is consistent with city ordinances. Projects must be consistent with the city’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Recommended improvements shall seek to maintain the architectural integrity of the building and, to the extent possible, shall seek to promote cohesiveness and compatibility of the commercial corridor. Recommended signage and landscaping improvements shall be consistent with the recommended façade improvements and the overall theme for the corridor/district. All recommended improvements shall be compatible with the City of Burlington’s standards that apply to the areas, taking into consideration the City of Burlington’s UDO with regards to setback, height, signage, and other elements.

**PRIORITY CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT GRANT CONDITIONS**

1. Project shall be located in the Priority Corridors (Maple Avenue, Webb Avenue, North Church).
2. Project shall be constructed in accordance with the Scope of Work.
3. Budget shall be based upon a minimum of 2 estimates.
4. Project plans/specifications/drawings shall be attached to the application.
5. Grant Funds will be disbursed in an amount not to exceed \$30,000.00 as match to the project’s budget upon completion of the project. Funds will not be disbursed until the following has been provided:
  - a. All invoices pertaining to the project
  - b. Evidence of all closed permits
  - c. Inspection performed by the City’s Inspection Department
  - d. Dated before and after photos submitted to the City’s Economic Development Staff
  - e. Release of Liens
  - f. If applicable, written permission of building owner.
6. Work shall be done in accordance with the State of North Carolina Building Code and City of Burlington Codes. Applicant is responsible for obtaining any permits and/or approvals required prior to construction.
7. Work shall commence within 30 days of permit issuance from the City of Burlington.
8. Work is required to be completed within 180 days from the noticed date of approval by the Economic Development Department, or the grant approval will become null.
9. All documents are to be provided to the Economic Development Department within 15 days of work completion.
10. Requests for extension of the 180-day timeline will be reviewed by the Priority Corridor Improvement Program Committee and may be granted under certain circumstances. Extension requests must be submitted in writing to the Economic Development Department at least 30 days prior to the 180-day expiration date.
11. Upon completion of the project, the applicant is required to maintain the improvements for a minimum period of 5 years from the completion date.