



Freehold “Downtown/Peach Orchard” Neighborhood District Commercial Rehabilitation Enhancement Grant Program

Overview

The Freehold Downtown/Peach Orchard Neighborhood District Commercial Rehabilitation Enhancement Grant Program seeks to foster a critical mass of visible and tangible change in the District’s mixed-use commercial core. The larger goal driving this approach is to catalyze revitalization and attract new investment into the Freehold NPP District.

A healthy and vibrant commercial area is a critical component of the Downtown/Peach Orchard District’s economic well-being and quality of life. Within the District, attractive building facades support and encourage local businesses. They can have a significant effect on the attractiveness and marketability of the surrounding area. To encourage property and business owners to reinvest in the “Downtown/Peach Orchard” District, Freehold is offering grants through the NPP grant program to assist in the exterior renovations of these otherwise sound and vital properties.

Applications will be reviewed by an evaluation team comprised of representatives from NPP Stakeholder Team. The factors to be considered by the team evaluating applications will include the following:

- Consistency with the goals of the Downtown/Peach Orchard District Plan (15%);
- Consistency with the Neighborhood Preservation Program Storefront and Façade Design Guidelines (45%);
- Potential for project to attract additional businesses and to stimulate the Neighborhood Preservation Program District’s economy (15%);
- Applicants track record and business experience (15%); and investment level and source of any matching funds from the applicant (10%).

Applicants will be guided by Storefront and Façade Design Guidelines prepared by the State of New Jersey’s Neighborhood Preservation Program (see **design guidelines packet at <https://www.freeholdboroughnj.gov/community/neighborhood-preservation-program.html>**). Buildings must reside within the “Downtown/Peach Orchard” Neighborhood boundaries (see map – Page 5).



Commercial/Mixed Use Rehabilitation Grant Use: Storefront and Façade Improvements

Amount: Façade grants from your local NPP program may now be given to property or business owners up to a maximum of \$10,000 during the 5-year duration of the grant cycle (2022-2026).

Match funding: Façade grants up to \$5,000 of NPP funding do not require a match. Any façade grant over \$5,000 will require a one-to-one match documented for every dollar included up to the maximum of \$10,000. For example: A façade grant of \$7,500 will require a minimum match of non-NPP funding of \$2,500, while a grant of \$10,000 will require a minimum match of non-NPP funding of \$5,000.

Method of Payment: Reimbursement paid at project completion.

Applications for this program's third year will be reviewed for approval from April 1, 2024 – May 31, 2024, or until the initial funding has been committed to approved projects. All projects must begin within 30 days of approval and must be completed by September 30, 2024.

Program Details

Applicant Eligibility Requirements:

Property owners of commercial/mixed-use structures and building tenants, with leases of more than one year in length located within the Downtown/Peach Orchard Neighborhood District area are eligible for funding. The maximum amount of NPP- funded grants a single private business or building owner may receive over the duration of our 5-year approved Implementation Plan is \$10,000. This means that if awarded a \$10,000 for a façade in Year One, you may not receive any other cash grants from regular NPP funding.

You may still receive technical assistance, training, and other small business support as part of any district- wide programs you may offer in those cases where there is no cash grant using NPP funding.

Property Eligibility Requirements:

Properties that are used in whole or part for service or commercial activities are eligible for funding. The program is intended to assist projects that promote retail activities, create an



attractive environment, encourage Neighborhood Preservation Program District character and architectural design, use quality materials, and incorporate good design concepts.

Projects meeting these objectives that follow the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) Storefront and Façade Design Guidelines are eligible for a grant for exterior improvements as per the grant categories described herein. To qualify, applicants may not start on their project until after receiving the necessary approvals. If work begins before application or approval, the NPP program cannot fund the project.

Eligible Costs

Grants may be used for comprehensively restoring or substantially beautifying or enhancing the publicly visible storefront or entire facade or elevation of a commercial building.

- Eligible items include uncovering and restoring historical facades and storefronts, removing existing damaged or poor-quality facade materials and replacing them with more appropriate and attractive designs and materials, and other detailing which leads to a substantially enhance appearance.
- The following may be funded as part of a more comprehensive facade improvement: windows, doors, exterior cleaning, tuckpointing, painting, exterior lighting, shutters, gutters, and historical architectural elements.
- Signage (both projecting and sign bands) and awnings that meet the Neighborhood Preservation Program District design guidelines are also eligible for funding.

Ineligible Costs

The cost of new construction, repair or replacement of a roof, work to a façade not visible from the streets and sidewalks, maintenance, billboards, landscaping or paving are not eligible under the grant program.

Grant Requirements

1. Projects must be started within 30 days of approval and completed by September 30, 2024. Extensions of the completion period may be granted for inclement weather, or the ordering of special building materials. The applicant must request an extension in writing. Freehold NPP staff will notify the applicant in writing of its approval or denial.
2. The owner/tenant shall comply with all requisite Freehold Ordinances:
 - The owner/tenant/contractor shall obtain the required permits before beginning the construction work.
 - The owner/tenant/contractor shall obtain Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approval if required.



- All work associated with the commercial/mixed use rehabilitation grant is to be performed by a licensed and insured contractor; all work must, as applicable, comply with the Neighborhood Preservation Program Storefront and Façade Design Guidelines.
3. Proof of completion, compliance with code requirements and submission of qualified receipts will be required before payment.

Items to Be Included in the Downtown/Peach Orchard Commercial Rehabilitation Enhancement Program request submittals:

1. The application from an owner should include a copy of the building deed, or land contract. An application from a tenant must include a copy of the lease and written approval from the owner for the application.
2. Both applications must include photographs of the facades and/or storefronts to be improved.
3. If the application is conditionally approved, the owner/tenant will be required to prepare and submit cost estimates and drawings of the proposed work, to obtain final approval.

Processing Steps

Step 1. Applications must be submitted by mail, electronically by email or in person. By mail or in person: submit to **Freehold Downtown/Peach Orchard NPP Program, C/O Dominica Napolitano, 30 Mechanic Street, Freehold, NJ 07728**. Applications may also be submitted via email to: dnapolitano@freeholdboro.org. Subject line: **NPP Façade Application**.

Step 2. If applicable, The Downtown/Peach Orchard NPP Program staff will contact the applicant to discuss the proposed improvements. If the proposal meets the requirements of the program, a Conditional Letter of Approval will be sent to the owner/tenant. This letter may require modifications or changes to the original proposal.

Step 3. The applicant must submit plans, cost estimates, and drawings to the Borough of Freehold. Downtown/Peach Orchard NPP Program staff will let the applicant know if there are any additional questions that arise based on the submission of plans.

Step 4. Once approved, Downtown/Peach Orchard NPP Program staff will prepare and furnish the applicant with the grant letter of agreement.



Step 5. The applicant must sign the grant agreement and return to Downtown/Peach Orchard Program Staff.

Step 6. The applicant must obtain all permits and approvals for the required work. The applicant must visibly display the sign provided by Downtown/Peach Orchard Program Staff on the exterior of the project site indicating “Funding provided in part by the Freehold Downtown/Peach Orchard Neighborhood District Commercial Rehabilitation Enhancement Grant Program.”

Step 7. The owner/tenant will be reimbursed upon satisfactory completion of the project. Proof of completion, submission of receipts and compliance with code requirements will be required before payment.

Step 8. The grantee holds a ribbon cutting at a mutually agreed upon time with the media, Freehold officials and NPP Stakeholder team to celebrate the completion of the project.

Neighborhood Map

