



FORT MILL

ECONOMIC PARTNERS

Utility Improvement Grant Program Guidelines

Program Overview

Fort Mill Economic Partners has developed and implemented a Utility Improvement Grant Program to encourage reinvestment in, and revitalization of, the downtown commercial district. This program provides reimbursable matching grants of up to \$15,000 to help offset the cost of utility improvements to a property owner or tenant's commercial building. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis until all available funding for the current fiscal year has been committed. Individuals and business owners who wish to be considered for a grant must complete and submit a formal application.

Purpose

Fort Mill Economic Partners Utility Improvement Grant Program provides financial assistance to eligible commercial property owners and tenants in the downtown commercial district. Funds may only be used for qualified utility improvements, as defined within these guidelines.

The primary objectives of the Utility Improvement Grant Program are to: 1) Encourage the revitalization of existing commercial buildings and districts by incentivizing private sector investment; 2) Expand the town's commercial tax base by attracting and retaining businesses within the downtown area; 3) Enhance property values in the downtown area by improving the functionality of existing buildings; 4) Preserve the integrity of the town's historic resources; and 5) Promote the general health, safety and welfare of the community.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants include owners of commercial properties or commercial tenants located in within a designated commercial area, as defined below. Commercial tenants who are leasing a building for which improvements are proposed must submit an *Owner Consent Form* with their completed application. Only businesses whose current or proposed use is permitted (either by-right or conditional) by the town's zoning ordinance are eligible for funding through the Utility Improvement Grant Program. Fort Mill Economic Partners reserves the right to approve or deny any application for any reason or no reason at all.

Eligible Buildings: For the purpose of this program, an eligible building must be used, either exclusively or primarily, for commercial use. Eligible buildings must have a commercial use located at street level. Mixed use buildings, including those with second-floor apartments, shall be eligible to apply for Utility Improvement Grant, provided the Grant is for work for the first floor commercial space.

Designated Commercial Areas: The Utility Improvement Grant Program is open to eligible applicants located within the town’s Historic Preservation Overlay District. (See below for district map)

Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPOD) Map



Expenditure Requirements

Eligible Expenditures: For the purpose of this program, the following types of expenditures shall be deemed eligible for reimbursement:

- Upgrades for water, sewer, electrical, or natural gas services to the Commercial tenant space. Examples of eligible expenditures are:
 - Adding grease traps or interceptors,
 - Upgrades to water meter and/or water services or sizes,
 - Upgrades to sewer lines or services,
 - Upgrades to electrical service panels, meters and/or other electrical upgrades,
 - Upgrades to gas services.

- All improvements and/or modifications must be consistent with all zoning and building codes requirements as adopted by the Town of Fort Mill. Proof of permits to construct improvements will be required prior to Grant funding.

- All work must be completed by licensed contractors, legally operating in the Town of Fort Mill. The applicant is responsible for obtaining any necessary permits. Applicants should contact the town’s Planning and Building Departments for assistance with the permitting process.

Ineligible Expenditures: The following types of expenditures are not eligible for reimbursement:

- Work that is generally considered ordinary repair and maintenance. Ordinary repair and maintenance is defined as “any work, the purpose and effect of which is to correct or prevent any deterioration or decay of, or damage to, a structure, site or any part thereof and to restore the structure or site, as nearly as may be practicable, to its condition prior to such deterioration, decay or damage using materials which are of a design, color and outer appearance as close as practicable to the original.” For the purpose of this program, roof repair and replacement shall be considered ordinary repair and maintenance.
- Improvements that are required as a result of a code violation or citation; however, improvements that are the result of voluntary compliance and the applicant’s desire to bring a property into conformance with the town’s current design standards will be considered.
- Site furnishings, amenities, non-permanent structures and movable equipment.
- Any work which has not been reviewed and approved by the Town of Fort Mill.
- Any work completed without obtaining necessary permits from the town.

Grant Awards

Maximum Award: The Utility Grant program provides for a one-time grant of up to \$15,000 per property for eligible Utility improvements.

Minimum Award: The minimum grant award shall be \$500.

Multiple Buildings/Parcels: Improvements made to multiple buildings on a single parcel, multiple storefronts on a single building, or a single building located on multiple parcels (under the same ownership) shall be subject to the \$15,000 maximum award.

Future Grant Awards: Any applicant who receives a Utility Improvement Grant award shall not be eligible to apply for a subsequent grant award for at least thirty-six (36) months.

Application and Selection Process

Application: All applicants must submit a formal grant application, using an official form prepared and distributed by Fort Mill Economic Partners. All applicants must submit the following information to be considered for the Utility Improvement Grant Program:

- Completed Utility Improvement Grant application form

- Owner Consent Form (if applicable)
- Design Drawings of proposed Utility improvements
- List and/or description of materials to be used
- Detailed cost estimates/bids for proposed improvements
- IRS W-9 Form (available at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>)

Applications will be reviewed as submitted while program funding is still available.

Fort Mill Economic Partners Review and Approval: The Board of the Fort Mill Economic Partners will consider applications that are submitted. On the basis of:

- Encourage the revitalization of existing commercial buildings and districts by incentivizing private sector investment;
- Expand the town’s commercial tax base by attracting and retaining businesses within the downtown area;
- Enhance property values in the downtown area by improving the functionality of existing buildings;
- Preserve the integrity of the town’s historic resources; and
- Promote the general health, safety and welfare of the community.

Grant Awards: While funding is still available, the Director of the Fort Mill Economic Partners will notify the applicant within 30 days of the Board’s approval. All projects receiving a Utility Improvement Grant from the Fort Mill Economic Partners shall require the issuance of a permit from the Town of Fort Mill to construct the utility improvement prior to funding. The applicant shall have one hundred and twenty (120) days to provide proof of permits to construct the utility improvement. Any applicant who fails to provide a permit within one hundred and twenty (120) days following the date of the notice of award of the Utility Improvement Grant shall be deemed to have forfeited his or her grant award.

Reimbursement Process

Once the applicant has submitted proof of the construction permit, The applicant will be provided with a one-time payment for the approved amount. The payment shall be in the form of a check issued by the treasurer of the Fort Mill Economic Partners.

For More Information

For more information about the Utility Improvement Grant Program, please contact Mariah Price, mariahprice@fortmillep.org.