

Legistar #200275

Business Improvement Grant Program

(Proposed Revisions to the *Façade Improvements Incentive Program for Existing Commercial Buildings*)

Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area Advisory Board

October 20, 2020

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Gainesville
Community
Reinvestment
Area



Agenda

1. Program History
2. Goals of the Revisions
3. Proposed Program Revisions
4. Summary of Improvements
5. Next Steps
6. Recommendation

Program History



WHAT WAS IT?

A program that allowed property owners within the unique districts to apply for a grant reimbursement (50% up to a cap per district) for exterior remodeling of their building.

SUCCESSSES

- **\$515,804** FY19 Façade Grant program combined investment within the four districts
- \$220,897 GCRA grant funds
- \$294,907 Private investment funds



Goals of the Revisions

- Consolidates four former programs
- Clarifies policy
- Concentrate impact
- Improves administrative process
- Builds a user-friendly document

Proposed Program Revisions

What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Program name	“Façade Improvements Incentive Program for Existing Commercial Buildings”	“Business Improvement Grant Program”
Area	Separate programs for each former CRA district	One program for single district
Program grant/offering	Differing maximum funds available per district	Tier-based funding structure
Evaluation of grant applications	Point-based system to assist in determining if participant met requirements	Replaced with tier-based funding structure

Proposed Program Revisions

What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Digital design assistance	Previous programs offered this assistance	Removal of digital design assistance
Eligibility requirements	Allowed multi-family projects	Specifically allows non-profits to apply but residential & governmental facilities do not qualify
Eligibility requirements	No language concerning new construction	Buildings must be at least five years old
Eligibility requirements	Proof of City business license not required	Businesses need to provide proof they are current with their business license

Proposed Program Revisions

What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Eligible improvements	Didn't define storefront	Defined storefront as the front side of a building facing a transit corridor
Eligible improvements	Architectural fees capped at \$500	Architectural fees not to exceed 10% of Project amount
Ineligible improvements	Two separate sections one for excluded improvements & one for maintenance	Combined this into one section
Target corridors	Each district had their own list of target corridors	The new target corridor list was taken from the adopted GCRA Reinvestment Plan

Proposed Program Revisions

What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Matching funds	Program was not consistent in calling out that the matching grant was for 50%	Clearly states that it is a 50% matching grant
Application requirements	Photographs of the existing building conditions	Added photos must show their relation (if any) to transit corridor
Application requirements	Two cost estimates from different sources	Estimates must be apples to apples & delineate eligible & any non-eligible work
Application requirements	Did not call out a work schedule	Work schedule that shows when work is expected to start and end

Proposed Program Revisions

What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Application process	Did not provide a timeline for review process	GCRA staff will perform initial review of grant application within 30 days
Application process	Requirement for each districts' board to approve a completed application	Applications up to \$50,000 approved by GCRA Director
Application process	Requirement for each districts board to approve a completed application	Applications between \$50,000.01 & \$100,000 reviewed by GCRA Director prior to submittal to City Manager for approval

Proposed Program Revisions

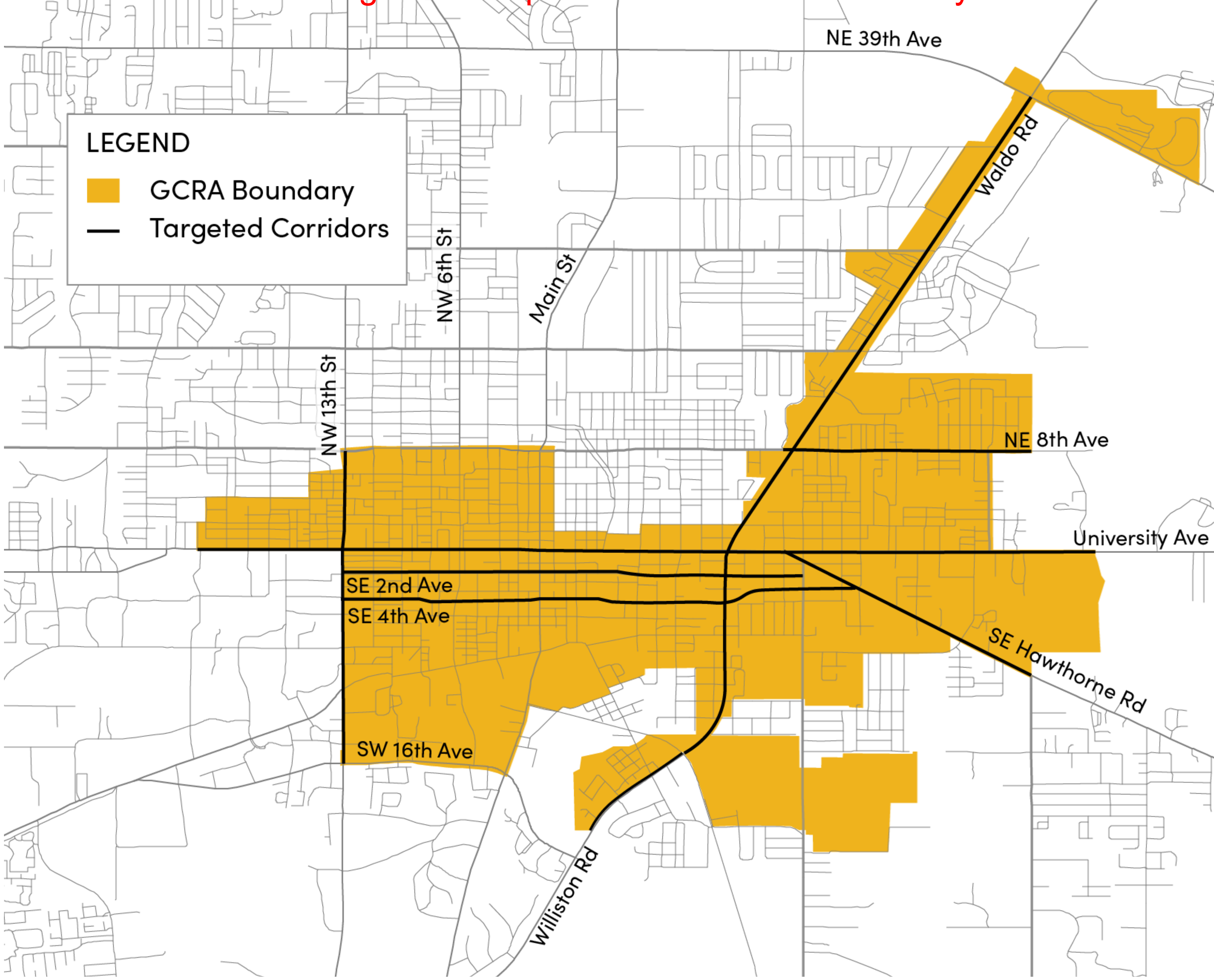
What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Application process	Requirement for each districts board to approve a completed application	Applications over \$100k reviewed by GCRA Director & City Manager & then City Commission for approval
Application process	Did not provide to applicant here in this section when the 12-month period starts	Twelve months begins the date the Agreement is countersigned by the City
Application process	Did not show that a façade easement would be taken in this section	Façade easement is filed on the property by the City per terms of the agreement

Proposed Program Revisions

What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Application deadline	Had language about concerning a 5 pm deadline 4 weeks before a board meeting	Changed to applications are accepted on a rolling basis contingent on funding. If program is paused a waiting list will be implemented
Evaluation of applications	This section has been added	Specifies that only completed applications are eligible. Incomplete will be returned for issues to be corrected
Guidelines renamed and improvements made	Grant guidelines	Program guidelines

Proposed Program Revisions

What Changed	Original Guideline	Proposed Update
Program guidelines	Didn't specify if new grant applicants would have priority over repeat applicants	Specifies that new grant applicants will have priority
Program guidelines	Allowed for photographs to be used in future publications	Additionally allows City to place temporary signage on the property to promote program
Program Revisions	This section has been added	Allows for City Manager to approve de minimis changes to the program that do not involve grant dollar amounts or program geographical areas, including target corridors.



Proposed Tiered Funding Structure

TIER 1

Located anywhere within the GCRA boundary.
Provides for a 50% matching grant of up to \$10,000

TIER 3

Provides for a 50% matching grant of up to \$50,000 if three of the six below are met:

- ITEMS FROM THE TIER 2 LIST
- 75% or more of storefronts within one building are being externally renovated. This requirement would entail a single entity applying for the multiple storefronts
- Storefront is a grocery store (deriving at least 50% of yearly sales from groceries)

TIER 2

Provides for a 50% matching grant of up to \$30,000 if two of the four below are met:

- Storefront is > than 30 feet in width
- Storefront is on a Target Corridor
- Storefront is comprised of multiple stories
- Business occupant/owner is registered with the City of Gainesville as a “Small, Local, or Diverse business”

TIER 4

Provides for a 50% matching grant of up to \$150,000 if the following is met:

Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places OR listed on the City of Gainesville’s Historic Local Register Listings

Summary of Improvements

Proposed Business Improvement Grant Program

- Changing the evaluation methodology to a simpler objective qualification tier-based system.
- Tier qualification system allows for access to higher funds based on qualifications met.
- Small, local, and diverse businesses can potentially qualify for additional funding.
- Improved approval process allows for faster turn around time to Applicant.



Next Steps

- GCRA Advisory Board presentation 10/20/2020
- Anticipated presentation to City Commission on 11/05/2020
- Once approved, begin promotion:
 - Inform 40+ businesses on waiting list via email
 - Press release, GCRA website article, social media, GNVNews
- The FY21 budget is \$250,000. Participation in the program would influence recommended FY22 funding

Recommendation

**GCRA Director to GCRA Advisory Board:
Approve the Business Improvement Grant
program as presented.**