



INVEST HAGERSTOWN – COMMERCIAL SIGN & FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM GOALS

In partnership with private developers, the City of Hagerstown wishes to:

1. Inspire and enable significant redevelopment, both city-wide and in the urban core, reusing and repurposing existing vacant and under-utilized properties, in which there are significant market and/or physical condition barriers to development or redevelopment.
2. Create the opportunity for new jobs throughout the City of Hagerstown and Washington County.
3. Increase the value of Hagerstown’s commercial and mixed-use properties.
4. Strengthen and improve market rate rental properties and increase homeownership.

SUMMARY

The goal of the Commercial Sign & Facade Grant Program is to provide an incentive to businesses and property owners to enhance their building’s presentation to the public with improved storefront designs and other façade elements to contribute to the overall enhancement of the City Center. The City also recognizes attractive signage is an important part of running a successful business, and if done right, may assist in building brand visibility and increasing customer awareness. This program is subject to funding availability and is on a first-come, first-served basis. All projects must pertain to commercial or mixed-use buildings.

1. Commercial Sign grants range from a minimum of \$250, to maximum of \$1,500.

COMMERCIAL SIGN PROGRAM GRANT AMOUNTS		Required Applicant Match	Overall Project Total
Grant Minimum	\$250	\$250	\$500
Grant Maximum	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000

2. Façade grants range from a minimum of \$2,500, to maximum of \$7,500.

FAÇADE PROGRAM GRANT AMOUNTS		Required Applicant Match	Overall Project Total
Grant Minimum	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000
Grant Maximum	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$15,000

3. The grants both require a 1:1 match from the applicant. Example: a \$2,500 façade grant would require a \$2,500 investment from the applicant for a total project investment of \$5,000.
4. The applicant is the party responsible for the project expenses. The applicant will be required to demonstrate expenditures equal to the grant and the required match related to work that was completed.
5. A project may be defined as planned or in a pre-construction phase. Completed projects and those already in progress are ineligible. For projects that are planned, projects must start within 6 months of application. Work on facades must not begin and signs may not be ordered before City approval, and before HDC approval if required.
6. The City determines the required date of completion based on the project completion date shown on the application plus reasonable contingency.
7. Signs must be on-premise and applications must include sign dimensions, proposed design and layout, materials, and method of attachment.
8. Funding will be awarded upon completion of an approved project and development plan.
9. All projects shall comply with federal, State and local codes, laws and ordinances.
10. All grants are subject to funding availability.
11. Applications are accepted on a continual basis and the Invest Hagerstown Review Committee will review applications received monthly.
12. Building permits are typically required for the following (including but not limited to): installation of awnings and canopies, structural repairs, electrical repairs/installation, etc. Please contact the Planning and Code Administration Department for official permit requirements.
13. Any business planning to install signs at their location must check with the City of Hagerstown's Planning & Zoning Administration to determine allowable signage permissible, and to learn if a building permit is required for the proposed signs.

Eligible Applicants

1. All properties must be in the designated Main Street area, and include commercial or institutional storefronts, or be office buildings, and the improvements must be visible from the street or public way.
2. Eligible signage may include wall signs, window signage, sidewalk signs, floor signs, and more as local zoning allows. Please refer to City of Hagerstown Regulations for Business Signs prior to application.
3. Eligible project costs include construction improvement costs, materials, and soft costs including architectural and engineering fees.

Ineligible Applications

1. Non-profit development applicants.
2. Grants will not be provided for animation, bare-bulbs, or flashing illumination or imagery.
3. Grants will not be provided for certain types of businesses, including: pawn shops, gun shops, massage parlors, adult video/book shop, adult entertainment facilities, tanning salons, check-cashing facilities, gambling facilities, and liquor stores.
4. Properties that are 100% residential are ineligible.
5. Projects that do not meet the minimum investment threshold.
6. Applicants who are not in good standing with the City, County, State or Federal Governments.

Additional Requirements for Commercial Sign and Façade Projects Located in Downtown Historic District

1. City Historic District Commission (HDC) approval is required.
2. HDC requirement include submitting 1 copy of drawing, sized 11x17 inches or smaller (if larger, provide 12 copies) and manufacturer's literature for all materials being proposed and/or sample materials proposed.
3. Applicant will be required to attend a Historic District Commission Meeting. These meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month in *City Hall, Room 407*.
4. Planning and Code Administration staff will work with you to schedule the meeting. For questions regarding the Historic District Commission Meetings, contact the Planning & Code Administration's Administrative Coordinator by phone at 301-739-8577 Ext. 138, or by email at planning@hagerstownmd.org.
5. Historic District Commission (HDC) information and HDC meeting schedule and deadlines for submission of materials is available at: <https://www.hagerstownmd.org/101/Historic-District-Commission>
6. Failure of the applicant to provide requested documents and failure of the applicant or representative to appear at the scheduled HDC meeting, will result in postponement of the application until the next regularly scheduled meeting. The applicant may be dismissed if there are two (2) or more postponements. If an application is denied, the same application shall not be renewed within a period of one (1) year of the denial.
7. After the project is completed, photos showing that completed work must be submitted.

GENERAL FACADE GUIDELINES

STOREFRONTS

Many of City Center's storefronts are original to the building: others are more modern after alterations during some point in the buildings history.

Historic Storefronts:

- Preserve original materials or details and leave them uncovered. Preserve the original form of the storefront.
- Replace missing original elements or repair existing elements. If elements are irreparable, replace them with like materials and design.
- Retain, maintain, and/or uncover the original kick plate material, marble bases, and ceramic tile entryway floors whenever possible.
- Occasionally, leaded glass transoms are in their original state. Restore these via careful cleaning and treatments.
- When physical or photographic evidence exists for the original storefront, restore the storefront to its original form if the altered front has not achieved historical significance of its own.
- When attempting to restore and/or clean historic details or building elements, do not use harsh abrasives or treatments.



Non-Historic Storefronts:

- Relate the design of first floor storefronts to design details of the upper levels of the building façade. Design new storefronts to fit within the first floor building openings as formed by columns, piers, and cornices. Repeat the window and door rhythms that already exist on the building.
- If appropriate, doorways should be in a recessed entranceway to provide a protected area for customers and to add more window visibility for merchandise displays.
- Doors should contain large glass panels as opposed to solid or residential-type doors with small areas of glass.
- Remove non-historic false fronts and siding. This includes metal cladding, fascia panels, pent roofs, and other materials that cover or disrupt the original detailing and materials of the storefront.
- Pent roofs (narrow, continuous shed roof) are a design element added to storefronts in the 1970s as a way to modernize and draw attention to storefronts but are out of character with the historic streetscape. Therefore, these are not acceptable on new additions or modifications to existing storefronts.
- Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, and T1-11 are not acceptable materials for a storefront restoration.



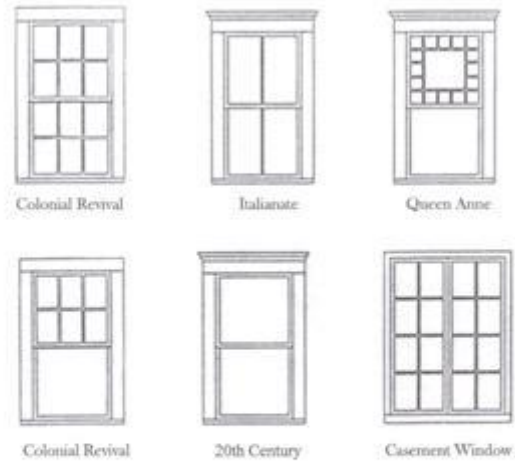
- Do not add trim or details that did not exist on the building during its historic period.
- Primary storefront windows should not be used or opened for the purpose of installing Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) or other similar devices.

BUILDING ELEMENTS

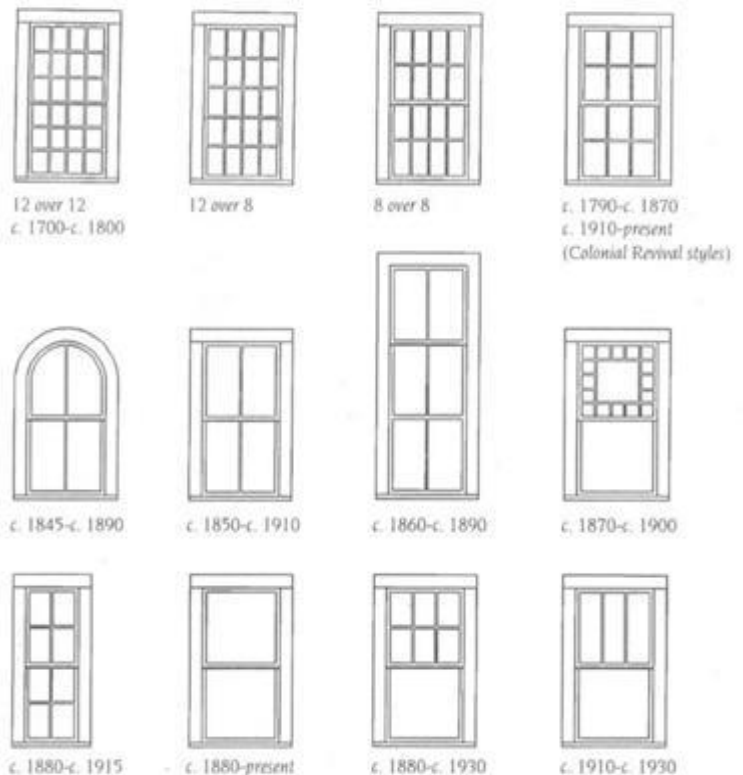
Windows: The windows of many City Center buildings are important to the architectural and historic character of the building, the streetscape, and to the character of the entire district. When windows are inconsistent from one level of the façade to another, property owners should install windows that are consistent with each other and the period of the building.

- Retain and repair original windows, frames, sashes, sills, lintels and trim or replacements that have acquired their own historical significance.
- Replicas or replacements of like design and style are appropriate for those windows that are beyond repair or deteriorated to a point that requires high levels of maintenance.
- The preferred replacement treatment, when feasible, is a wood replacement sash kit with insulated glass panes. Complete unit replacement is also acceptable.
- Attempt to maintain original glass or finishing.
- Choose window frame finishes that fit with the colors and textures of the building.
- Avoid conflicts of style.
- If simulated muntins are used, they should appear on the outside, between the panes and on the inside of the sash. When the existing windows are not historic material, muntins should follow the same pattern as the existing windows or a pattern acceptable to the historic period of the building.
- Blocking down or filling in openings to fit stock window sizes is not acceptable. Restore damaged or filled in window openings.
- Plate glass and safety glass are appropriate glazing materials. Wire glass, textured glass, mirrored glass or plastic/acrylic replacements are not appropriate. Stained glass is acceptable for certain locations such as door transoms, as part of a larger window, or in restaurants.

MOST COMMON WINDOWS



INAPPROPRIATE WINDOW REPLACEMENTS ON HISTORIC STRUCTURES



- While it is preferred to retain or replace-in-kind historic windows on front and other facades visible from a public way, non-wood replacement products shall be allowed if the new window replicates the appearance of the original window in design and in the width and depth of individual window elements. For facades not visible from a public way, replacement windows would not be required to replicate the appearance of original windows.

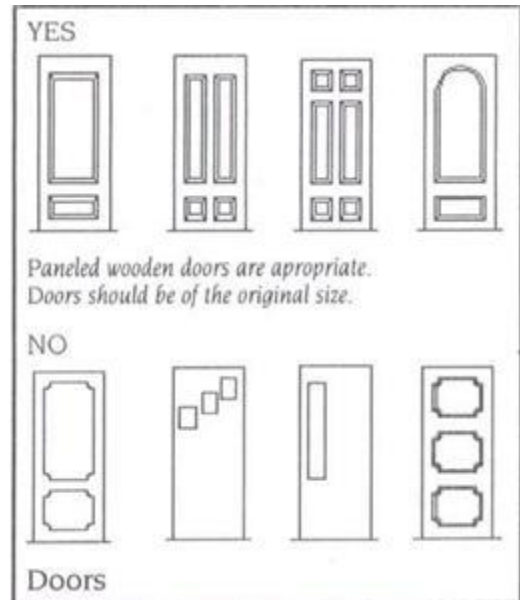
Doors and Entrances: Doors and entranceways are important to the character of the building.

- Secondary entries should be unobtrusive in design so as not to conflict with the primary entranceway.
- Maintain and repair original doors, frames, sills, lintels, and transoms. Weather-stripping is an appropriate modern change.
- Exterior building hardware should be appropriate to the style and period of the building.
- Replacement doors should be of similar style and finish to the style of the building. Restore covered or missing transoms.
- Replace inappropriate modern doors with replicas of historical ones. Maintain the appropriate style when replacing or adding doors for new uses.
- Retain and repair original windows, frames, sashes, sills, lintels and trim or replacements that have acquired their own historical significance.



Roofing: Roofs are an important characteristic in defining the overall historic character of the building. Roof shape, decorative features and materials all determine the character. They are highly visible from the public ways and are instrumental in determining the historic period and shape of a building.

- The roof's original shape, decorative features (dormers, chimneys, balustrades, etc), and roofing should be preserved and maintained during a repair.
- Retain historic roofing material. When necessary, repair damaged sections with materials that match in size, shape, color and texture of shingle. Avoid extreme colors or patterns along rooflines unless historic or photographic documentation exists.
- A variety of modernized substitution materials are available for those historic materials found in the District. The Commission will consider these cost-effective materials if they blend with existing materials and are properly labeled and explained during the application process.



- Dormers and skylights, required by new uses, should be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and not damage or obscure character-defining features. Avoid adding dormers unless they fit with the architectural style of the building. Repair existing dormers and skylights as needed.

- Lower rooftop mechanical systems below sight lines from the street or screen and paint them a color that blends with the building.
- Appropriate gutter shapes and material include concealed, ogee, and semicircular in galvanized steel, copper, or white aluminum. Downspouts should be circular and located along natural vertical lines and corners of the building.

AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

Awnings and canopies are traditional methods to advertise businesses. They also protect pedestrians from the weather and guard merchandise from the sun. They are part of the historic character of Downtown; however, when designing your awning, it is important to consider these guidelines:

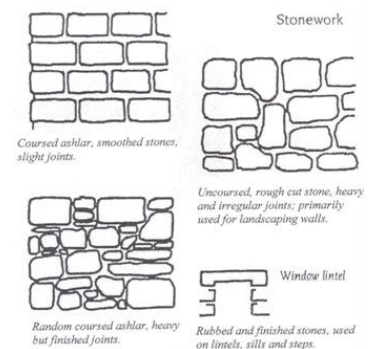
- Heavy canvas and vinyl material should be used for awnings. Plastic and aluminum are not recommended.
- Awnings can be retractable or built on permanent pipe frameworks.
- A clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk is required by the Building Code.
- The valance of the awning should be free to move and be between ten and twelve inches high. The valance is the appropriate area for store identification.
- Awnings for upper story windows should extend at least half way down the windows and should complement the street level awnings in color and style.
- Signs painted or printed on the awning are permitted, but should have color schemes compatible with the awning and building facade.



MATERIALS

Masonry: Brick and stone are the most common materials found in the Downtown. The brick ranges from hard-glazed in yellows and browns, to red face brick. Stonework includes granite, limestone, cast stone, and decorative marbles. Other masonry includes exterior plaster and stucco.

- Maintain historic masonry in its original condition. Repair cracks or imperfections in masonry rather than replacing an entire wall. This includes stonework around windows, entrances, chimneys, etc.
- When replacing large segments of masonry, do so with like materials in color, texture, and composition.
- Do not paint masonry unless the masonry was previously painted or historical documentation is available.



- Avoid applying surface treatments whenever possible.
- Avoid applying form stone to any building façade.
- In cases where stucco needs repair, use a mixture that matches the original in texture and color.
- When cleaning masonry, test any cleaning techniques on a small area, out of view from any public way. If the technique damages the masonry, abandon its use.
- When duplicating mortar, joint size, and profile, use like color and similar texture to maintain a consistent wall appearance.
- Use masonry mortar, not Portland cement mortar. Mortar should match the existing in color, texture, composition, and tooling. The roof's original shape, decorative features (dormers, chimneys, balustrades, etc), and roofing should be preserved and maintained during a repair.



Terra Cotta: Terra cotta is a glazed, fired clay, molded into shapes, and then used as decorative elements. Sometimes the glaze contains many colors, while other times it is natural. This material has great historic character and therefore needs to be preserved.

- Avoid removing terra cotta detailing from your historic property. Be careful to avoid cracking or damaging terra cotta during phases of restoration.
- When repainting terra cotta, avoid harsh chemicals that could damage the clay. Painted terra cotta should remain painted, natural should remain natural.



Metal: Some storefronts have been constructed or renovated with porcelain steel, stainless steel, or aluminum panels. Other buildings have cornices, fascias, and other items of trim constructed of sheet metal or cast iron.

- Retain and restore existing metalwork. Repaint surfaces requiring repainting and patch surfaces requiring small amounts of replacement.
- Replacement metal should match existing material in color, width, texture and style. Replacement panels fabricated with sheet metal should match the existing material in color and texture.
- Patch badly deteriorated metalwork with sheet metal pieces. Match these to the same profile as the existing work.
- Reproduce intricate details in materials such as fiberglass and install them to match existing work.
- Avoid adding metal to a building unless it conforms to the architectural style and historic period of that building.



Wood:

- Preserve any historic or original wooden features. Repairs should maintain wooden structures or details. Replacement should occur after repairs are exhausted or a structure becomes unsound.
- Avoid leaving wood in its natural state or stained unless historically documented.
- When replacing wood do so with like materials, color, and texture.

ARCHITECTURE

Decorative Detail: Most commercial façades have some decorative architectural details. Some building details span over the entire length of the building, which establishes a visual continuity.

- Maintain and repair original ornamentation.
- Match repaired portions to original portions to avoid visual inconsistencies.
- Replacement details should match the original. Consult an artist or specialist for examples of adequate replacement designs and materials.
- Uncover details hidden by false fronts, signs, or new additions.
- If damage occurred as a result of any addition, repair the damage.
- Maintain and protect existing decorative elements during all stages of rehabilitation.
- Do not add decorative elements that clash with the architectural style of the building. If existing false ornamentation exists, restoration to the original façade requires historic documentation.



HANDICAPPED ACCESS

When updating your historic property to meet accessibility regulations, it is important to identify the applicable accessibility requirements, to explore alternatives, and to implement solutions that provide independent access that are consistent with preservation standards and guidelines.

- Solutions for accessibility should not destroy a property's significant materials and features, but should increase accessibility as much as possible.
- If new or secondary entrances required for providing accessibility must be located on a primary facade, they should blend with existing entrances or remain unobtrusive to maintain original ornamentation.



Any business or non-profit organization planning to install signs at their location must check with the City of Hagerstown to determine how much signage is permissible by Zoning and to learn if a building permit is required for the proposed signs. If you will be working with a sign contractor, they should be familiar with the need to check on zoning and permitting. The following is a brief overview of the main sign considerations to be reviewed in the zoning ordinance. For detailed information on what is permitted for each type of sign, it is recommended that you go to the Planning & Zoning page of the City web site and review the Signs section of the Zoning Article in the City's Land Management Code. If a property is located in a historic district, approval by the City's Historic District Commission is also required. For Zoning questions, email planning@hagerstownmd.org.

Prohibited Signs – roof-mounted signs, flashing lights, bare bulb lights, signs attached to vehicles and stationary equipment, temporary signs used over 90 days, and signs that completely cover glass entry doors.

Freestanding Signs – signs on a pole or monument base in the ground

- **Size, Height and Number** - Square footage of sign face, height of sign structure, and number of sign structures allowed is determined by zoning district and in some cases by size of commercial tract.
- **Landscaping** - required around the base of any new freestanding sign structure.

Flush, Wall-mounted Signs – signs attached flat to the wall or painted directly on the wall

- **Size** – the amount of square footage of signage allowed per business is determined by zoning district, length of exterior wall of lease space where the customer entry door is located, whether the building fronts on multiple streets, and whether the building is an office building.
- **Number of signs per building** – as many as desired provided the total square footage does not exceed what is allowed for the business or building.

Projecting Signs – signs hanging from a bracket perpendicular to the entrance wall

- **Hanging requirements** – include minimum clearance from the ground, setback from curb line, and maximum heights.
- **Size** – depends upon if the sign is for a tenant in a multiple tenant building or in a single-tenant building.

Window Signs – no restriction on the number or size of signs taped or adhered to windows. A glass entry door, however, shall not be covered with signs so views into the lease space are prevented.

Wall-mounted Directory Signs for multi-use buildings – the sign shall be located beside the entry door and shall not exceed 12 square feet in area.

Portable, A-frame Signs – allowed for street level tenants and upper floor arts and entertainment tenants; must be located near the entry door; maximum size is 6 square feet, limit is one per business, and sign must be brought in at night.