



## TID Façade Improvement Program

### **Introduction:**

The City of Berlin created a downtown TID (#15) in October of 2008. The purpose of creating a Blight Elimination Tax Increment Finance District was to promote redevelopment and investment from local property owners, both within and outside of the district. The creation of the TID allowed the City to provide needed infrastructure, as well as funding, to local stakeholders through incentives and grants, and to encourage property owners and business owners to proactively participate in revitalization.

The following guidelines have been created and adopted by the City of Berlin to help direct and evaluate requests for financial assistance through TID # 15 for façade improvements.

### **Purpose:**

- Promote Blight Elimination
- Promote Redevelopment of area
- Prevent Further Deterioration

### **Façade Improvement Program:**

Property owners in conjunction with businesses within the Downtown TID #15 District of the City of Berlin are eligible for up to \$5,000 in matching grant funds for improvements to the exterior of their building and improvements visible from the exterior of the building. As a matching funds program, the City of Berlin TID Program will reimburse the property owner for up to 50% of the expense to a maximum grant amount of \$5,000 on a case-by-case basis. All grants will be rewarded to eligible applicants while funds are available. Applicants are eligible for only one grant award per property in a 24-month period, unless otherwise approved by the City of Berlin Common Council. For larger projects demonstrating a significant positive impact on the downtown, the Common Council may approve funding awards which exceed the stated program cap.

### **Eligible/Ineligible Applicants:**

The Façade Improvement Program is available to any property owner lying within TID #15 boundaries. The program is also available to business tenants of such buildings given the

property owner's written consent. Properties zoned as residential or are listed as tax-exempt are not eligible. Projects which are not visible from the public right of way are ineligible.

**Program Guidelines:**

No application will be reviewed or presented to the Common Council for consideration on behalf of an applicant if the property is delinquent with their City of Berlin Property Taxes or Berlin Utility Bills on any property located within the City.

All improvements, including signage, awning, lighting and structural work must meet the requirements of the Zoning code and design standards identified in the City of Berlin Municipal Code. All proper Building permits must be obtained.

Each applicant should demonstrate sufficient need for financial assistance. The burden is on the requesting party to prove that the proposed project would not be feasible without TID funds assistance.

**Eligible Activities:**

Eligible activities include design and construction costs directly related to visible façade improvements including signage, awnings, exterior lighting, painting, windows, doors, exterior walls, siding, chimneys, masonry repair, and other architectural elements.

**Process:**

Applicants should submit the following documentation if interested in participating in the façade improvement program:

1. Complete Façade Improvement Program Application
2. Complete Release of Information
3. Submit contractor estimates for proposed project

After application materials are received, City Staff will review applications. Complete applications will be presented to Common Council for approval.

Notification of approval/denial will be provided to the applicant by City Staff within ten (10) days following the Council meeting. Note that the project must be approved prior to any of the work taking place. Failure to have prior approval may result in a denial of the funding request for the qualifying project. All projects must be underway within 120 days of program funding approval.

Appropriate documentation, such as invoices, must be submitted to the City Clerk for the fund reimbursement upon completion of the project. All reimbursable expenses must be within 180 days of the program approval. If the projects are not completed in accordance with the requirements and time schedule identified, then the applicant must reappear to request approval for an extension.

**Design Guidelines:**

- Context: The façade is designed in a manner that is mindful of and complementary to the existing building and natural environment.
- Harmony: The façade uses materials, forms and colors that serve as unifying elements with the surrounding buildings and natural environment.
- Compatibility: The façade should be compatible with nearby building architectural scale, color, rhythm and proportions.
- Building Design: All buildings shall be designed with attention and sensitivity to the historical, architectural and physical context in which they are located.
- Colors: Color selections of exterior surfaces, materials and equipment should not detract from the surrounding area.
- Historic Preservation: Preservation of unique historic or architectural landmarks is encouraged.