

**Planning & Economic
Development**

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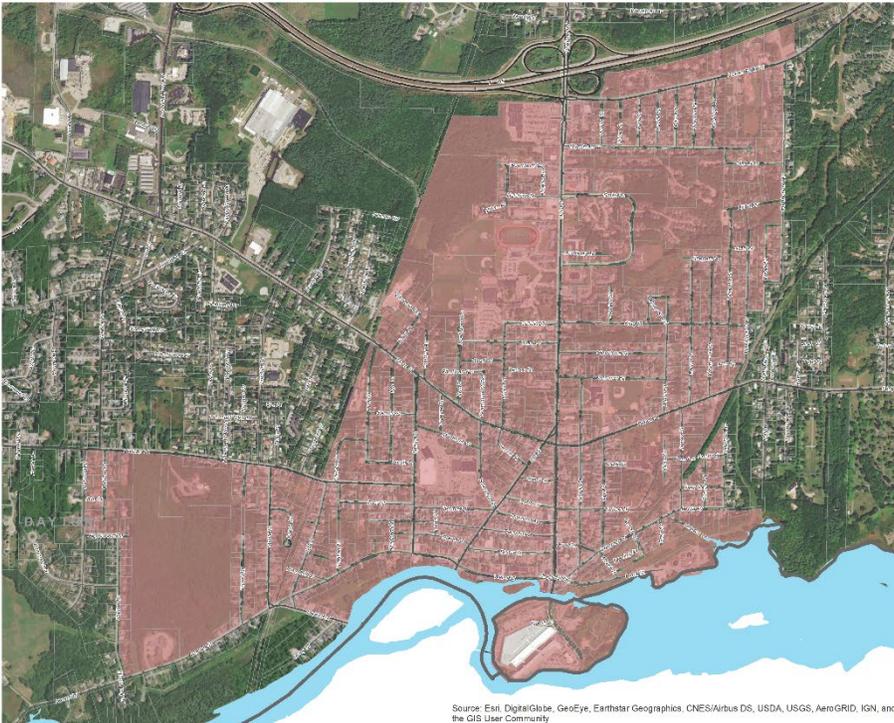
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Downtown Façade Grant Program Overview

The City of Saco has established a Downtown Façade Grant Program to help support economic development and community revitalization efforts in the Downtown. The program offers matching funds for a variety of façade improvement activities, including painting, window or door repairs or replacements, signage, awnings, and storefront restorations.

The City of Saco is the administrator of this program, led by the Planning & Economic Development Department. Our goal is to assist as many qualified projects as funds allow. This grant will be offered on an ongoing basis as funding permits. The Downtown Grant Program is currently funded for up to \$60,000 annually through the Downtown TIF District (see map below). The award amount is based on available resources, the number of qualified applicants, and other evaluation criteria.

Downtown Omnibus TIF District



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Key Program Details

- Grants are available for up to \$15,000 and require at least a **1:1 match**.
- The applicant will be **reimbursed** for the amount of the grant award or 50% of the total project cost, whichever ever is less, **upon completion of the project**.
- No improvements begun prior to award notification will be eligible for reimbursement.
- All projects must be completed within one (1) year of grant approval.
- The applicant is responsible for obtaining all permits and land use approvals, including Historic Preservation Commission and Site Plan approval when appropriate, prior to construction.

Grant Applications and Reimbursement

To apply for a Downtown Façade Grant, submit a complete application ([available here](#)) to Jessa Berna, Economic Development Specialist, via email jberna@sacomaine.org.

Application deadline: **Rolling deadline until March 31, 2021**

Upon completion of a Downtown Façade Grant project, the business/property owner shall submit paid bills/invoices for the work to the Planning & Economic Development Department. The applicant will also be required to submit a cash flow statement, income statement, and balance sheet. The City will then perform an inspection to determine that the work was completed in accordance with the original grant application and cost estimates. Upon satisfactory inspection, reimbursement will be processed within one (1) month.

Eligibility

A Downtown Façade Grant application must pertain to a commercial use within the Downtown TIF District (see map above). The grant applicant may be the property owner or the tenant, but tenants must have the property owner's signed approval of the proposed building improvement.

Qualifying and non-qualifying grant projects are listed below:

Qualifying projects

- Signage
- Awnings
- Storefront Improvements
- Restoration of original/historical windows, doors, and trim where possible
- Repair or replacement of windows, doors, and trim
- Cleaning and/or painting of wood surfaces
- Cleaning and/or re-pointing of surface brick or stone
- Re-painting of brick, stone, or cement
- Removing paint from brick or stone
- Exterior lighting
- Removal of "modernization" efforts and/or inappropriate non-historic alterations/additions
- Cleaning and repair or installation of approved siding
- Roofing visible from street-level

- Removal or repair of fire escapes
- Hardscapes

Non-qualifying projects

- Interior repairs of any kind
- Purchase of commercial property/equipment
- New construction

Selection Process and Criteria

All applications will be reviewed by a four (4)-member Grant Selection Committee, including a representative from the Planning & Economic Development Department, Historic Preservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, and Saco Main Street.

Applications will be ranked and selected based on a clear and documented set of evaluation criteria. Funding will be provided to those applications receiving a score of at least 75% until the grant fund is exhausted. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and evaluated monthly until **March 31st, 2021**.

Depending on the number of applications, the City of Saco may assign “waiting list” status to projects that qualify for selection once the grant fund has been exhausted. The Grant Selection Committee reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Impact (50%)** – Overall impact of the project on the City. Does the project seek to restore the historical or architectural significance of the building? Will the project contribute to the retention or addition of a business downtown? Will the project help bring the building up to code? Will increased pedestrian traffic result? Will the improvements contribute to the safety of the building and its surroundings?
- **Sustainability/Permanence (25%)** – How permanent are the improvements (signs are more changeable than new glazing, for example) and is there a maintenance plan for improvements? Does the business own the building? If not, how long have they been there and how much time remains on the lease?
- **Community Contribution (25%)** – Is the area around the business kept clean and free of debris on a consistent basis? Does the business participate in community-based activities and promotions? Does the applicant actively promote downtown Saco and their own business?