

Village of Sutherland Economic Development Program Property Improvement Program Guidelines

The Village of Sutherland encourages private investment in primarily commercial areas of Sutherland and proposes the utilization of a Property Improvement Program to improve building facades and property lots within Sutherland. Under the improvement program, property owners or tenants are eligible to apply for grants equal to one-half of the cost of such improvements with certain limitations or a low interest loan. These funds are provided to create a positive impact that individual renovations or demolition can have on the overall appearance and image of the community and spur area redevelopment. The proposed yearly budget for the Property Improvement Program is allocated from the LB840 Economic Development Program of the Village of Sutherland.

Types of Assistance/Eligible Improvements

For commercial properties, the Property Improvement Program supports exterior business improvements, from minor renovation and historical façade painting to complete façade renovations and structure demolition. Residential properties are only eligible for demolition activities and sidewalk repair. Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

Commercial Properties:

- Replacement of or addition of:
 - Awnings
 - Signage
 - Graphics
 - Window display areas
 - Exterior lighting
 - Concrete/Sidewalk
- Painting (Mural, Decorative or Historical in nature).
- Restoration of original architectural features.
- Other improvements which are visible from the street and have a positive impact on the appearance of the building.
- Structure demolition.

Residential Properties:

- Structure Demolition
- Sidewalks

The rear and sides of commercial buildings that are visible from major travel corridors and sidewalks also may be eligible on a case-by-case basis. Professional, legal, design and permit fees may be included in the total storefront improvements cost.

All proposed improvements, rehabilitation, and demolition work will be subject to design review by the Citizens Advisory Review Committee (CARC) and the Sutherland Village Board of Trustees. The CARC reserves the right to judge all applications on a case-by-case basis. Applications will be approved based on graded priorities of: anticipated aesthetic improvement to the area, historical benefit, restoration vs. maintenance efforts and the perceived ability of applicant to pay for improvements on their own.

All improvements must conform to all Village of Sutherland zoning and building code requirements and are encouraged to follow basic design guidelines.

Guidelines for businesses:

- Signage: A property may receive a loan for up to \$10,000 at one-half the current prime rate or 3% interest, whichever is lower for three years OR a grant may be requested for 50% of the total project, but not to exceed \$5,000.
- Façade and/or Sidewalks: A property may receive a loan for up to \$20,000 at one-half the current prime rate or 3% interest, whichever is lower for five years OR a grant for 50% of the project, but not to exceed \$10,000.

Guidelines for residential properties:

- Structure demolition and/or Sidewalks: An applicant may receive a loan for up to \$20,000 at one-half the current prime rate or 3% interest, whichever is lower for five years OR a grant may be requested for 50% of the total project, but not to exceed \$10,000.

Grant recommendations by the CARC will be forwarded to the Village of Sutherland Board of Trustees for approval and funding.

Approved property owners or tenants have one year to complete the work detailed on the applicant's Property Improvement Program application. If the applicant cannot complete the work detailed on the application within one year, they have the ability to request one extension from the CARC to complete the work.

Ineligible Improvements

No property improvement application will be considered if any portion of the improvements are started, constructed, or completed before the CARC reviews and approves the application. The following improvements are ineligible for awards under the Property Improvement Program:

- Interior remodeling (except window display areas).
- Purchase of furnishings, equipment, or other personal property, which does not become a part of the real estate.
- Improvements completed or expense incurred prior to notification of approval and notice to begin construction from the Economic Development Program Administrator.
- Improvements related to new construction.

Eligible Applicants

Owners of commercial property within the Village of Sutherland and those businesses who are tenants of commercial buildings if the building owner's consent is shown in writing.

Funding priority for residential property owners will be given to applications that have specific redevelopment plans following demolition activities.

Process

1. Pre-application Conference
 - a. Prior to making a formal application, the prospective applicant should meet with the Sutherland Economic Development Program Administrator. The pre-application conference familiarizes the applicant with the program and its procedures. An application form may be obtained at this time:
2. Development of Preliminary Design
 - a. The applicant and Administrator should then meet to discuss the needs and ideas of all parties, design alternatives and develop cost parameters. Following this meeting, a cost estimate should be prepared by the applicant.
3. Application Process
 - a. Applications should be completed and submitted to the Administrator, including all supporting and additional documentation. If more applications are received than current funding levels can accommodate, the Administrator will prioritize them based on the date of receipt of the completed application.
4. Review and Approval by the CARC
 - a. Following the review of the Program Administrator of the preliminary design and application, a meeting of the CARC will be held with the applicant. The CARC will submit a recommendation of funding to the Village Board of Trustees
5. Approval by the Village Board of Trustees
 - a. The Village Board of Trustees has the final authority on the expenditure of funds in support of the Economic Development Program of which the Property Improvement Program is a part.
 - b. If the decision is to proceed, the applicant should secure the services of the appropriate contractors needed to complete the rehabilitation or demolition work. A building permit may be required for certain improvements. All contractors should be properly registered and licensed as required by law. The

contractors selected must secure all required building and construction related permits for the Village and will be expected to complete the rehabilitation or demolition project in accordance with the approved plans, all applicable codes and ordinances, and standard building practices.

6. Begin Work

- a. After the Property Improvement Agreement has been executed, a “Letter of Approval and Notice to Proceed” will be sent to the applicant by the Administrator, including an estimate of the total grant reimbursement amount the applicant is eligible to receive and/or the terms and disbursement schedule of the loan.
- b. Assuming the Village has issued all necessary permits, work may begin. Although there is a one-year time limit, projects are expected to not take longer than 120 days to contract for, commence, and complete. Prior to, or during construction, any on-the-job changes to design notes must be reviewed and approved by the Administrator.

7. Completion of the Job

- a. Upon completion of the project, the work is to be approved for compliance with the original design drawing and design notes, including initialed change, Village building codes, zoning ordinances, and sign ordinances. Only that work for which the permit was issued will be inspected.

8. Payment of the Grant

- a. After the rehabilitation or demolition work has been inspected and certified as to its completion and plan compliance, the Administrator will prepare a reimbursement invoice to be submitted to the Village of Sutherland for payment. The Village of Sutherland must approve the invoice prior to payment being made.

9. Repayment of grant to Property Improvement Fund:

- a. If the work completed under the Property Improvement Program is of such a personalized nature that it would limit the use of a subsequent property owner, the CARC reserves the right to seek 75% repayment of that specific improvement grant award if the property is sold within seven months of the final Village of Sutherland payment. The CARC reserves the right to judge instances of such repayment on a case-by-case basis.