

2016 'Community Re-Investment' Program!

Last year Bluffton NOW! spearheaded the development and deployment of the Community Re-Investment Program (CRP) with great success! Nearly \$200,000 worth of projects and improvements were accomplished and the city provided \$68,000 in reimbursements to property owners to help defray the cost for those improvements. We are excited to offer an even better CRP for 2016. The City provided matching funds and have been increased for this year and a new Lighting Option has been added to help enhance the look of Downtown. Please take a few minutes to review the program information below and see if the 2016 CRP can help YOU with your project plans.



Overview

The CRP is to be used to re-build, repair, renovate or improve the exterior façade, structural and mechanical components, and interior elements of buildings located in the city-center in a way that is consistent with current city design, style and is in adherence to all city building codes. New this year is the addition of LED Lighting projects to enhance the night time look of our buildings and provide a safer environment for tenants and customers. Funds are also available to use for demolition of unsafe buildings.

Use of Funds

Funds provided are to be used for improvements only and will not be eligible for purchasing real estate or starting a business. A list of 'qualified improvements' are listed below:

Funds are to be used for 'qualified improvements,' defined as:

- Exterior façade improvements including but not limited to: paint, awnings, windows, siding, brick repair, roof repair, signage, etc.
- Interior improvements including, but not limited to: flooring, paint, carpentry work, water or fire damage restoration, and ceiling repair.
- Exterior façade work must include replacement of boarded up windows with actual glass windows (property owner may darken window if they wish).
- Major structural and mechanical defects that affect public safety must be corrected first (to be determined by Bluffton City Inspector).
- Demolition work to tear down failing building structures or removal of debris from falling building infrastructure or materials.
- LED exterior lighting projects (exterior lighting only).

Approval Board

All investors or applicants will be required to file an official application to be reviewed by the Approval Board.

The Approval Board will review all applications and make final allocation decisions. This board consists of: one city council member, one contractor or developer, two Bluffton NOW! members, and one representative from the financial services industry.

Reimbursement Process

Funds will be distributed by the City of Bluffton on a reimbursement basis, meaning that funds will only be provided after work has been completed by participants. Phased Reimbursement may be approved by the Approval Board. Proper documentation of work completed and a satisfactory inspection by the City of Bluffton Building Inspector will be required for all projects before funds will be reimbursed.

Source of Funds

The City of Bluffton will provide a 50% reimbursement for all non-LED lighting improvements up to \$25,000 per project. The City of Bluffton will provide a 75% reimbursement for exterior LED lighting improvements up to \$25,000 per project. There is \$150,000 in total matching funds allocated for 2016, with \$50,000 (part of the \$150,000) set aside for LED projects which are on a first come first serve basis. Projects large and small are welcome, you should not hesitate to submit your application no matter how small it might seem.

CRP Project Examples:

Exterior, Interior, Structural upgrades:

- \$1,000 private investment receives a \$500 reimbursement.
- \$10,000 private investment receives a \$5,000 reimbursement.
- \$50,000 private investment receives a \$25,000 reimbursement.

LED Lighting projects:

- \$1000 private investment improvement project receives a \$750 reimbursement.
- \$10,000 private investment gets a \$7500 reimbursement.

Other Requirements

- Major structural and mechanical defects that affect public safety must be corrected, including bringing building up to city building code.
- All work must be performed by an **Insured Contractor**.
- All planned improvements must comply with proper zoning and ordinance laws.
- Applicants must provide a detailed cost and estimate plan for each improvement.
- Any properties not zoned according to program requirements must receive an exemption from the Approval Board.

Eligible Properties - Geographic Area

Funds are available to all parties interested in improving properties within Bluffton's "city-center." The "city-center" is defined as the area shown in Figure 1 below. Only properties found within this area will be eligible for reimbursement through the program at this time. Participants may be deeded owners, contract holders or tenants. All contract holders and tenants are required to provide written permission of improvements from deeded property owner.



Figure 1 - City Center Geographic Boundary

Questions?

Contact Nick Huffman (260-827-8255) or by email at blufftonnow@gmail.com to get your application started. Get started now by downloading an application packet on our website by visiting www.blufftonnow.org and clicking on the 'Community Re-Invest' link at the top.

Come and join the progress! We hope to approve YOUR project application soon!

Nick Huffman
CRP Chairman