

## **Your Storefront/Façade Creates an Inviting and Attractive First Impression to Potential Customers**

The storefront of a business is the most significant architectural element of any building, and its appearance plays a critical role in attracting customers, and maintaining the health of the business.

FNI, in cooperation with the City of Neenah, can offer design and funding assistance to local merchants and property owners who have plans to restore and improve their storefront/façade. The objectives of the program are to support private reinvestment in properties, preserve the historic character of downtown storefronts, promote visible improvement that reflect positively on the business district, and increase business by making the district more attractive to customers.

### **Program Description**

The façade improvement program can provide a dollar for dollar match, up to \$10,000 per storefront, to property owners who are planning a storefront project.

Eligible improvement projects include replacement/improvement of windows and doors, modification of entryways to

facilitate access for the handicapped, façade treatment of exterior surfaces (in keeping with the historic character of the building), and code-complaint signage and awning treatments.

All new storefronts must be constructed within the original opening designed for it. All new storefronts must be compatible with the conforming storefronts on either side of it. Existing bulkhead lines will be followed if feasible. Storefronts must seek to maximize the amount of window space provided. The original façade surface of the building will be restored whenever possible. Where feasible, the removal of any materials constructed over the original façade will not be replaced. Repair and replacement of damaged surfaces is an eligible cost.

The storefront is the most significant architectural feature of many commercial buildings and its appearance plays a critical role in the success of the business within.

### **Program Guidelines & Procedures**

To participate in this program, there must be strict adherence to the following program rules and procedures. Failure to comply could result in no matching funds being provided at the end of the project:

- Program applications can be picked up at the Future Neenah office, 135 W. Wisconsin Avenue, or at the City Community Development Office, Neenah City Hall.
- Submit the application, along with a cost estimate from a qualified contractor, and a sketch of the proposed improvement, and submit to the City Community Development Department, 211 Walnut Street, Room 313, Neenah WI.
- City staff will contact you to review the proposal and confirm the procedures for approval and funding of the project.
- Following all required approvals, building permits can be secured for the project.
- Begin construction/renovation project.
- Upon completion of the project, a final City inspection approval must be secured.
- Reimbursement, in the agreed upon matching amount, will be made to you from the City upon submittal of a paid receipt for all approved labor and materials used in the project.
- *Any work contracted for or completed prior to the approval of an application for funding under this program will not be eligible for cost reimbursement.*

This program is made possible through a grant received by the City from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Consequently, recipients of a façade improvement grant must follow some specific federal regulations:

- For any projects exceeding \$2000 in total cost, federal Davis-Bacon Wage Rate requirements may apply. This law requires competitive bidding for the projects, and contractors on the project will be required to pay their laborers a prevailing wage rate as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Exterior/façade improvements will be subject to review by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This review must be completed before the project is approved for matching grant assistance.
- In portions of the downtown area that are within the designated historic district, the Neenah Landmarks Commission must review and approve the proposed exterior improvements before a building permit can be issued.

### Additional Resources

Future Neenah, Inc.  
135 W. Wisconsin Avenue  
Neenah, WI 54956  
(920) 722-1920  
Fax: (920) 722-6585  
Email: [info@neenah.org](mailto:info@neenah.org)

Good for Business: a guide to rehabilitating the exteriors of older commercial buildings.  
*Can be ordered from:*  
Department of City Development  
Historic Preservation Planning Staff  
P.O. Box 324  
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0324  
(414) 286-5707

# Open for Business

## A Façade Improvement Program

### **Guidelines and Procedures for Restoring and Improving Storefronts in the Downtown Area**

**In cooperation with:**  
City of Neenah  
Future Neenah, Inc.