The City of Olathe is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the businesses and services provided in the Downtown area. Downtown offers something residents can’t find anywhere else in Olathe: historic architecture, a human-scaled street grid, and unique locally-owned businesses. Olathe’s Downtown Storefront Improvement Grant is a program designed to complement these strengths by encouraging and assisting commercial property owners to enhance the design and appearance of their storefront façades.

About the Storefront Improvement Grant.
This grant targets businesses, offices, retail and food establishments located in Downtown Olathe (see attached map). The program is established as a matching grant in which the City of Olathe can contribute up to 50% of the cost of eligible improvements, up to a maximum of $20,000 for a single property.

Requirements.
Applications shall be submitted to the City of Olathe, Planning Division.

A property improved under this program may apply for the maximum allowances no more than once every three (3) years.

Award amounts may vary in size, however at no time will exceed 50% of the total construction/improvement costs for the project, or a maximum of $20,000 for any single property. Award amounts are determined on a case by case basis.

Improvements to buildings occupied by or owned by schools, colleges and universities, government offices, and elected or appointed officials are not eligible for the grant program.
Program Eligibility.
Eligible improvements include the restoration of the exterior of the building including but not limited to the improvements to the exterior walls or structure, replacement, or addition of awnings, windows, doors, lighting, paint, landscaping, or signs. All projects submitted for the matching grant program must meet all City of Olathe Code and Ordinance requirements.

Project Selection.
Projects are selected that will provide the greatest positive impact to the downtown area. The following factors will be considered when determining project selection and priority:

1. Current condition of the building or facade
2. Conformance to City architectural requirements and Downtown Design Guidelines
3. Level of need/Abatement of City Code compliance issues.
4. Complements City’s public improvement strategies
5. Supports revitalization efforts and the City’s Envision Downtown Plan
6. Feasibility of implementation within the specified budget and timeframe

Grant Application Cycle.
The City of Olathe Storefront Improvement Grant Program will accept and consider applications in the order they are received, on a year-round basis, until total grant funds are expended for the fiscal year.

Design Elements, Approaches & Criteria.
The storefront facade is usually the most prominent feature of a downtown commercial building, playing a crucial role in a store’s advertising and merchandising strategy. Although a storefront normally does not extend beyond the first story, the rest of the building is often related to it visually through a unity of form and detail. Storefront façade improvements should consider the entire building—window patterns on the upper floors, cornice elements, and other decorative features should be carefully considered, in addition to the storefront itself.
DESIGN ELEMENTS ENCOURAGED.

*Main Entries and Primary Façades.* Storefronts should have street-oriented main entries and consider the entire façade in design.

*Visibility.* Clear glass - visual street engagement, retractable awnings, internally lit, recessed entries, complimentary colors and signage.

*Windows--Vision Glass, Display and Transoms.* Street oriented building façades should be composed primarily of windows and display areas.

*Art and Signage.* Both elements are critical components of successful storefront design. If possible, signage improvements should be included in grant proposals.

*Lighting--Architectural and Decorative.* Architectural or display lighting used to create visual interest or emphasize building features.

*Awnings and Canopies.* Retractable awnings and permanent architectural canopies.

*Entryway Pavers.* Recessed entry improvements.

*Repairs.* Painting, wood, metal, and masonry pointing.

GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS.

1. Submit a letter (or email) of interest to City of Olathe Planning Division describing your proposed storefront improvement project.

2. Meet with Planning staff for consultation to discuss and review the proposed project and determine eligibility. A preliminary design sketch may be generated to assist applicant with approaching a design professional/architect.

3. Applicant submits Storefront Improvement Grant Application packet to Planning Staff for review coordination. Please use these items as a checklist of required information:

   - A completed Storefront Improvement Grant Application.
   - A detailed written description of the proposed improvement project.
   - Illustration of proposed improvements, i.e. a photo with marked revisions, and drawing to scale.
   - A materials specifications board or detailed description of materials and colors.
   - Project budget estimate.
   - Evidence of ownership of property or written authorization from property owner.
   - A statement on source of project funding that includes the required match, plus a 10% contingency. This could include a letter from bank or lender, account balance statement, or other information as approved.

4. When a complete application package is received, City staff will have a minimum of 30 days to:

   - Review application for completeness.
   - Schedule and conduct a site visit for the Storefront Improvement Review Committee.
   - Conduct a Storefront Improvement Committee meeting to consider grant award.
5. Authorization and funding of a grant will be determined by design criteria and subject to the following conditions:

- All projects must comply with City of Olathe Municipal Code, Building Codes, area plans and all other City, State and Federal regulations.
- Land Use and Building Permit Approvals (if necessary).
- For projects requiring building permits, drawings from a licensed Architect.
- Historic Preservation Approval (if necessary).
- A certificate of insurance showing adequate coverage and naming the City as additional insured with respect to the work proposed. Applicants signed acceptance of the Letter of Approval and Grant Agreement.
- Applicant posting grant information sign--City to provide.
- Copy of contracts between the business/property owner and contractor. All contractors are to be licensed, registered and bonded.

If a grant application is approved, the Review Committee will notify the applicant to proceed with Development Review Application (if applicable).

**Grant Period:** Projects will have one (1) year from the date of grant approval to be completed. Applicants receiving funding through this program are not eligible to apply the following fiscal year. If a grant is awarded and the building is sold during the grant period, the grant award is not transferrable to the new owner.

**General Conditions:** The following general conditions will apply to all projects:

- All applications are subject to available funding and shall be processed on a first come, first served basis.
- City staff may waive any requirement or condition on an application at its discretion.
- Improvements funded by the grant must be maintained in good order for a period of at least five (5) years.

Applications will be considered and awarded or denied by the Storefront Improvement Review Committee as determined by the City of Olathe. The City reserves the right to withdraw any grant awards at any time or for any reason. Applicants shall be notified in writing.

**Disbursement of Funds:** Downtown Storefront Improvement Grant funds will only be disbursed to property owners or businesses upon receipt of a contractor invoice(s) and satisfactory progress observed on the completed work. In-kind work performed by the applicant will not be eligible for reimbursement.

All work must be consistent with the approved grant application and the City must approve any changes in work scope or materials in advance of that work being performed.

**Criteria for Non-performance:** If a project is not complete one year after grant award date, the applicant will only be reimbursed for expenses that occurred up to that date.
For more information on the Downtown Storefront Improvement Grant, or to schedule a consultation to discuss your improvement plans, please contact the Olathe Planning Division at (913) 971-8956.

Grant applications should be submitted online to the Olathe Planning Division, or mailed to:

Olathe Planning Division
Attn: Storefront Improvement Grant
100 E. Santa Fe
P.O. Box 768
Olathe, KS 66051-0768

Thank you for your interest and investment in Downtown Olathe!