

*"Main Street" Washington*  
**Washington Business District Authority**

117 North Main Street

Washington, PA 15301

(724) 229-7207

FAX (724) 229-7208

[www.washbda.com](http://www.washbda.com)

E-mail: [wbdal@live.com](mailto:wbdal@live.com)



**Washington Business District Authority**

**Chairman:**

Christopher Potts

**Vice Chair:**

Linda Wolfe

**Secretary:**

Mark Logston

**Treasurer:**

Bill Mesler

**Main Street Manager:**

Peter Stefansky

**Administrative Assistant:**

Marcie Unrue

**Maintenance Superintendent**

Rob Phillips

Charles Deems

**Board Members:**

Thomas Zimmaro

John Taggart

Matt Uram

Donna Shwinghammer

*The Washington Business District Authority meets the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 pm in the Main Street office located at 117 North Main Street, Washington. The meetings are open to the public*

## **Façade Improvement Program – Design Challenge Grant Program Guidelines and Application**

### **MISSION**

The mission of the Washington Business District Authority is to preserve, improve, promote and enhance the downtown business district by following these four main principles: 1. Organization; 2. Design; 3. Promotion; and 4. Economic Restructuring.

The Washington Business District Authority's Main Street Program is committed to supporting the ongoing development and revitalization of the City of Washington, PA by providing the funding, information, resources and support necessary to preserve, improve, promote and enhance the downtown business district.

### **VISION**

#### **OUR CITY REPRESENTS OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

- We will build upon the rich history of Washington as a special place to live, work, shop and play. We will operate within a culture of resources, assistance, respect and diversity. The Downtown Business District of the City of Washington, PA will be a centerpiece of vibrant activity.

#### **OUR "CUSTOMERS," THE RESIDENTS, PROPERTY OWNERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS ARE OUR REASON FOR BEING**

- We will keep our promises to all of our customers. We will delight them with our responsiveness, support, insight and creativity. We will prove the value of our relationship by being the best at what we do.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS OUR LIVELIHOOD**

- We will innovate, using our ingenuity and creativity to provide better solutions. We will maintain our focus on where we can be the best and apply our expertise to do it better.

#### **OUR STAGE IS THE WORLD. OUR DOWNTOWN IS THE BACKDROP**

- We will be a conscientious provider of support and services a community neighbor and a responsible steward of our natural resources and greater environment.

# WASHINGTON BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY DESIGN CHALLENGE GRANT APPLICATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PARCEL ID # \_\_\_\_\_

## **PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION**

NAME(S) OF OWNER(S)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FAX \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## **TENANT INFORMATION**

NAME OF BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF BUSINESS OWNER \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FAX \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## **SIGNATURES**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tenant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tenant

Please enclose with completed application:

- Verification of ownership
- Copy of lease (tenant requirement)
- Signed letter of permission by owner for tenant to do stated work (tenant requirement)
- Signed estimates showing scope of work and cost. Estimates must include name, address and phone number of contractor.
- Color image of façade prior to work (digital or 35mm acceptable). A color image of façade after completion of work will be required to receive final payment

**\*\*INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED\*\***

**ALL DOWNTOWN PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS MUST BE CURRENT FOR AN APPLICATION TO  
BE ACCEPTED**

**WASHINGTON BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY  
DESIGN CHALLENGE GRANT APPLICATION**

1. In the first section, please provide a detailed description of the work planned. Include description of items, colors, styles, materials, and any other information that is relevant to the project.
2. In the second section, please list each contractor, the area of work they are \_contractor's estimate. Please also provide a total cost for the project.
3. Written estimates must be included with application. The contractor's name, address and contact information must be on each estimate.
4. You may either use the space provided (please print or type neatly) or attach a separate summary.

**Description of Work:**

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**Contractor/Job**

**Cost**

<b>Contractor/Job</b>	<b>Cost</b>
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**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WASHINGTON BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY  
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – DESIGN CHALLENGE GRANT**

**PURPOSE:**

The Washington Business District Authority (WBDA) Façade Improvement Program is a matching grant program designed to encourage community investment and revitalization through the rehabilitation of existing facades within the designated Special Services District (SSD) of downtown Washington. Renewed community investment will aid in reversing the decline of downtown properties, and spur economic growth, creating an inviting and attractive downtown, encouraging both visitors and customers to patronize Washington.

**SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT AREA**

The SSD has been defined as the designated area of downtown Washington from the southern intersection of North Main and Walnut Streets extending south to the railroad track crossing on South Main Street, and East on Chestnut, Beau, Cherry, Wheeling and Maiden Streets to College Street, and West on Chestnut, Beau, Cherry, Wheeling and Maiden Streets to Franklin Street. There are 234 eligible parcels in the designated SSD area.

**GRANT GUIDELINES:**

- **Only fully completed applications will be accepted.**
- **Applications will only be approved for property owners who are current on all Downtown assessment payments (WBDA Special Services District Assessment and the City of Washington Capital Improvement Assessment) for each property owned within the Downtown Business District. Further, applicant must be current on all property taxes on the property to be improved.**
- The structure in question must be located within the defined boundaries of the Downtown Business District.
- The application process must be completed and approved prior to the start of the project.
- The Design Committee will review and recommend all grant applications. The Washington Business District Authority will review and award all grants based on the Design Committee recommendations.
- The Main Street Manager will notify all applicants of the acceptance or refusal of an application.
- All Design Challenge Grants will be a 50% match up to a maximum of \$2500 per applicant.
- All façade improvements must be completed and final paperwork and paid invoices turned into the Main Street office within 180 days of the award.
- Both property and business owners are eligible. Business owners will need signed approval of the property owner.
- Distribution of grant money to the property or business owner(s) will occur only after the designated work is satisfactorily complete and all paperwork (including paid invoices and a color image of the façade), is accepted at the Main Street office.
- All façade improvements must comply with the WBDA Design Guidelines and City of Washington building codes.
- Only exterior renovations are eligible.
- Grants will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis during each funding cycle.
- WBDA reserves the right to photograph and document façade improvements for future use.

**ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

- Cleaning of exterior surfaces
- Repair/restoration of historic features
- Brick re-pointing
- Exterior painting
- Window repair/replacement
- Awnings
- Signs
- Exterior lighting

**INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

- Interior renovations and improvements
- Roof repairs except when part of a façade project
- Building permits and other miscellaneous fees
- Demolition or acquisition of property
- Sidewalk, driveway or parking lot repair

**DISCLAIMER**

I hereby acknowledge that I understand the terms and conditions of the WBDA’s Façade Improvement Program, and this signature so indicates my intent to meet the specified terms if the application is approved.

I understand further that, upon grant authorization, this project is approved for payment only in strict accordance with the Design Committee approved design plans which are attached to this application and hereby made part of this agreement.

I further understand that change orders are not eligible and that failure to comply with this agreement may jeopardize receipt of grant funds.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DESIGN APPROVAL AND GRANT AUTHORIZATION**

This application has been reviewed by the Washington Business District Authority and its Design Committee and conforms to stated design standards and guidelines. This application is hereby authorized for grant funding up to a maximum of \$2500. This amount is good for 180 days from the last date of signature below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Washington Business District Authority

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# WASHINGTON BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY

## FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

**The WBDA recommends the use of the “Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Buildings.”**

Design guidelines are recommendations to help a community direct the way it is developing and to guide it toward a future stated goal. Guidelines also allow the city and its residents to work together more effectively as new developments and construction are proposed in the designated area. These guidelines have been developed to help preserve the existing built environment, and to aid the WBDA and its Design Committee in working with new proposals. Guidelines provide consistency and avoid arbitrary design, thereby giving the tools and advice needed to integrate new construction and remodeling into the Special Services District (SSD).

The intent is to establish guidelines, which will enhance the environment through basic design principles, such as building texture, color, rhythm, and pattern. Improving the visual appearance of Downtown Washington increases *Community Pride* and is critical to the success of the area as are improving economic performance, strengthening public participation, recruiting new businesses, and expanding parking and “green” spaces.

The procedure is established to encourage individual identity for specific uses and structures; to encourage a district community; to enhance property values within the city; and to insure that the location and configuration of the structures are visually harmonious with their sites and with surrounding sites and structures.

#### **STOREFRONT DESIGN HISTORY**

The traditional commercial storefront can be considered the most important element that sets apart the Downtown Washington *character*. When originally constructed, our downtown buildings shared a consistency in design and proportion that was and is still important in conveying how our downtown is perceived by the customer seeking goods and services. A visually unified downtown is a powerful tool for attracting people – visitors, customers, employers and employees – to Washington, as well as to the individual stores, galleries, restaurants, and services.

Changes have occurred to our buildings during the years in response to various merchandising trends, technology, natural disasters, fire, and changing ownership. In most cases, the changes affected the commercial first floor storefront area, while the upper façade remained intact. In some of these cases, the original storefronts may still be in place, but are covered or in need of maintenance and/or repair.

The traditional commercial façade consists of three parts: the storefronts with an entrance and large display windows; the upper floor masonry façade with regularly spaced windows; and the decorative cornice that caps the building. These components may appear in various shapes, sizes, and styles, but the result is essentially consistent with the traditional façade. In the Downtown Washington Special Services District (SSD), the typical façade is two to three story masonry construction.

#### **DESIGN**

The traditional Downtown Washington building façade has a well-defined opening that the original storefront filled. The opening is bound on each side by piers, which were usually constructed of masonry. It is bounded on top by the storefront cornice, which is the structural member supporting the upper façade and bounded below by the sidewalk.

The storefront was composed almost entirely of windows. The large glass opening served to display goods the business had to sell, as well as to allow natural light deep into the store, thus minimizing the need for artificial light sources.

The visual transparency of the storefront is also important because it is part of the overall proportion system of the façade. The proportion of the window to wall areas in the traditional façade calls for more glass and less wall space at the storefront level, balanced by more wall space and less glass on the upper façade. When these buildings were constructed, the importance of maintaining these proportions so that Downtown Washington would be unified by a consistent design theme was recognized, thus making it an attractive place for customers to do business.

## **IMPROVEMENTS**

In considering improvements to the storefronts, it is very important that the original opening be recognized and maintained. The remodeled storefront should be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond it. Attempt to obtain old photographs of your building to compare with the current structure. Identify elements that have been changed or covered over.

Key points to consider:

- The storefront should be composed almost entirely of glass.
- The entry should be maintained and restored in its original location and configuration. If the original entry is gone, the new entry should be designed and placed with consideration to traditional design themes and their relationship to the overall building and symmetry.
- Transom windows that are covered or blocked should be reopened and restored.
- Storefront bulkheads should be restored or renovated.
- Original elements should be restored, such as columns, cornices, and entry doors and lighting fixtures.
- Signage should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Awnings, if required, should be integrated into the storefront design.
- The storefront design should be true to the time period in which the building was constructed.

## **WINDOWS**

Windows are an important component of the façade; they open the building with light and offer a proportional continuity between the upper floors and the storefront. Often deteriorated windows have been inappropriately replaced or simply neglected, thereby diminishing the overall character of the building. Every effort should be made to retain and preserve each window, its function, and any decorative details still remaining.

Protect and maintain the wood and metal of the window and its surrounds with appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning or rust removal. All bare wood should be primed with high quality oil or latex based primer and painted with one or two coats of latex or oil based paint. A gloss finish is preferable, being more dirt resistant and easier to clean.

Lose or broken window panes can be fixed easily by a qualified glazier. Make windows weather tight by caulking and installing or replacing all weather stripping.

Check the overall condition of the window materials and window features to determine if repairs are required. Check all the wood parts of the window for decay, cracks, or splitting. Pay particular attention to the sills and window sash bottoms where water may collect. Repair window frames and sashes by patching, splicing, or reinforcing. Replace all parts that are deteriorating or missing. Cracks should be filled with caulk, wood putty, or epoxy reinforcement and the surface sanded. Do not replace the entire window when limited replacement of parts is appropriate. If necessary, consider using replacement windows that are energy efficient.

If a window is missing or deteriorated beyond repair, replace the window with one that matches the building's original window. Use overall form and any detailing still evident as a guide. Always fill the entire window opening, even if part of the opening has previously been filled in. Windows filled in with brickwork or other closure materials should be reopened and restored to their original dimensions.

## **WALLS**

- Masonry walls should not be covered with siding.
- Masonry walls shall not be covered with stucco or stucco like finishes without exhausting all possibilities or repairing and painting original wall material.

- When stucco and stucco like materials must be used, their applications should be carefully designed to represent the material being covered. For example, cement plaster stucco covering brick could be divided into brick size shapes with standard width joints between the bricks. In a less representational situation, the applied stucco could be divided into sections, which would indicate floor levels so that an observer would be able to perceive the number of stories in the upper floors.
- Walls which are unaltered should be repaired where necessary and cleaned to restore the luster of the original material.

## **DOORS**

The entry into a storefront often can be the focus of the façade. Maintaining a traditional entry door or pair of doors can contribute to the overall character of the façade. Traditionally, the entrance door was made of wood with a large glass panel. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair an original door.

If a door is to be replaced, consider one of the following options:

- Have a new door built with the same design and proportions as the original.
- Find a manufactured wood or steel door that resembles the traditional storefront door.
- Use a standard aluminum commercial door with wide stiles and a dark anodized or baked enamel finish.
- Avoid doors that are residential in character or decorated with molding or window grilles.

## **SIGNS**

- Signs are a vital part of any commercial street in calling attention to the individual stores and in defining the image of the overall business area as well.
- When a streetscape is cluttered with too many signs or signs that are too large or randomly placed the result is an impression of confusion. When signs are kept to the right proportions, are appropriately placed, and are designed to be compatible with the facades, the result is a streetscape which gives a sense of harmony and order to the shoppers it attracts.

### **Placement**

- Wall signs should be mounted above the show windows and should not cover over the architectural details of the storefront.
- Show window signs can be mounted or painted directly on the glass or onto a clear acrylic panel suspended behind the glass. Window signs should be placed slightly higher than eye level.
- Store hour signs are best when placed on or near entrance doors.
- Store addresses can be applied to or painted on the transom over the entry door.

### **Size**

- A wall sign can extend the width of the storefront, between the columns or piers. Its height generally should not exceed 2 ½ feet.
- A show window sign should not cover more than 20% of the glass.

### **Quantity**

- In general, a shop front should not have more than two permanent signs, one primary, like a wall sign, and a secondary one, like a window sign.

### **Lettering**

- A sign should be lettered with a maximum of two different letter styles.
- Letter styles should be selected for readability and should relate to the type of business represented.
- Generally, letters for wall signs should be about 8" to 15" and occupy approximately 65% of the sign board.
- Lettering for show windows should be a maximum of 6" high.

## Message

- Signs should be kept simple, giving the minimum amount of information needed to identify the business and its main product or service.
- A sign is not meant to serve as an advertisement for every item the store carries.

## Colors

- Sign colors should compliment the building and storefront colors.
- Colors should be selected to reflect the type of business.
- Letters and background must have enough contrast for easy reading.

## Lighting

- Signs can be externally illuminated with hooded incandescent or fluorescent fixtures.
- Individual neon-tube letters can also be effectively used.
- Internally lit sign boxes should be avoided. If one is already installed and cannot be removed, it can be made less offensive by keeping the background opaque so that only the letters are lit.
- Flashing signs are unacceptable as they are distracting and detract from the positive image of the commercial streetscape.

WBDA and its Design Committee will review the signs for conformity in the external material composition, exterior structural design, external appearance and size with similar advertising or information media used in the architectural period of the district and a permit granted thereon.

## PAINTING

If you are considering painting the outside of your structure there are some very important facts to consider before you begin. First, it is a general rule that limestone, brick or other masonry should not be painted. Brick masonry, if not already painted, should be cleaned by the gentlest method possible and re-pointed if necessary. Never sandblast as it pits the masonry and loosens the mortar, causing damage that can never be repaired. Additionally, if the structure has already been painted and the paint is peeling, it should be wire brushed prior to painting.

Primers provide a base coat for a fresh layer of paint. Unfinished or freshly scraped surfaces should be primed. Careful preparation is essential to a paint job. Latex and oil base paints are often incompatible. Applying one directly over the other can result in excessive peeling.

## Paint Removal

Four basic alternatives for paint removal are:

- Hand scraping, which can be tedious, makes sense for small areas.
- Sanding, which removes part of the actual surface along with layers of old paint is often appropriate for large unadorned areas.
- Burning paint off with torches or heat lamps can be very effective. However, it runs the risk of scorching or burning the wood.
- Chemical remover is probably the safest and easiest method of paint removal. They are appropriate for both plain and ornamental surfaces.

The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* provides information regarding methods for approaching preservation. Following appropriate repair and restoration techniques ensures a quality, durable storefront finish and eases maintenance needs over time.

## Colors

The storefront colors are an important component of the overall continuity. The traditional storefront colors will be used for the overall design. WBDA will approve paint color for all buildings.

Selection of color on an old structure is one of the final steps in the process of repair, renovation and maintenance.

The color of your structure should be related to the colors of the other structures on the block. Generally no more than three colors should be used on the façade; either natural or painted brick counts as one color. Trim and details may be painted either in a color which contrasts with the walls, or you may choose a monochromatic scheme using a lighter or darker shade of the wall color. The color scheme should be used consistently throughout both upper and lower portions of the building.

Several color combinations are on file with the Main Street Manager. You should select your colors from those combinations.

## **LIGHTING**

Lighting has two purposes:

1. Illuminating the business
2. Discouraging crime

Lighting creates a feeling of security for the passerby and is an important factor in a commercial setting. A variety of light sources and locations should be considered in carrying out storefront renovations. Sign lights, display window lights, architectural lighting, and general area light is encouraged to advertise the business, highlight building features, and to illuminate dark corners of the property or street. In some cases, where general street lighting is sufficient, a storefront may require minimal illumination.

### **Unacceptable**

- Flashing, pulsating, dynamic, or moving lights
- Lights which glare onto the street, public way or adjacent properties
- Domestic style fixtures or fixtures that do not correspond to the character of the building. For example “carriage lamp” style fixtures.
- Neon tubing bordering display windows

### **Acceptable**

- Street lighting typically provides general exterior illumination. Where this lighting is minimal, providing an even level of illumination may be desired.
- Indirect lighting is encouraged.
- General Interior lighting of display areas help prevent break-ins by allowing both police and passersby to see the activity inside the store.
- The scale and style of the light fixtures should be in keeping with the storefront design.
- Decorative fixtures such as sconces and general building lighting accent storefronts and enhance a building’s architectural details.
- Lighting should attract attention to signs, store information, or building details but not to itself.
- Supplemental security lighting such as floodlights should be hidden or shielded to avoid glare.

## **SECURITY**

Storefront security is paramount in any retail environment and any neighborhood. However, elements such as metal bars and grates reflect a feeling of fear and of a crime-plagued area. These perceptions, whether real or not, result in a decrease in popularity and prosperity of the commercial zone. Solid grates are a liability for several reasons: they detract from the neighborhood quality of the street, they promote a perception of fear, and they conceal the interior from view. Grates are best built into the interior of the storefront ceiling where they are concealed during the day.

There are a variety of ways of securing a business without evidence of fortifications. Large, transparent windows and doors allow pedestrians and traffic to visually monitor safety. Security measures can also be enhanced through discrete solutions such as quality locks, internal alarms and notification systems, laminated safety glass and community watch efforts.

### Unacceptable

The following types of storefront security measures are prohibited in Downtown Washington

- Solid roll-down grates
- Grates mounted on the exterior of a storefront.
- Horizontally closing, scissor type gates
- Open mesh grates
- Security bars on the exterior of windows and doors.
- Replacing or covering glass with Plexiglas.

### Acceptable

- The installation of electronic alarm systems, especially when combined with laminated safety glass. These measures provide a reliable security means.
- Lighting of both buildings and streets to deter crime.
- Decorative metal gates to secure a vestibule area.
- Removal of exterior roll-down grates and grate boxes is strongly recommended.

### **AWNINGS**

Storefront awnings and canopies are both functional and decorative. They provide sun control for displayed merchandise, shelter for pedestrians, and an additional location for signage. Awnings also offer a tremendous range of color appeal to compliment the storefront and streetscape.

Whether the awning or canopy is a fixed or retractable type, select a soft, weather treated canvas or vinyl covering. Metal awnings are totally out of character with the historic qualities of the district. Be sure they are not oversized and out of proportion. They should fit within the storefront area and not cover columns or cornices.

## **STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

**“Rehabilitation means the process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.”**

The following “Standards for Rehabilitation” shall be used by the Secretary of the Interior when determining if a rehabilitation project qualifies as “certified rehabilitation” pursuant to the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and the Revenue Act of 1978. These standards are a section of the Secretary’s “Standards for Historic Preservation Projects” and appear in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1208 (formerly 36 CFR Part 67).

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.
2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced

in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

## BUILDING PARTS

