



Slate Belt Rising

a program of Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley

Commercial Façade Program Guidelines

2017

Slate Belt Rising is committed to the revitalization and historical preservation of the boroughs of Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, and Portland. The Commercial Façade Improvement Program is designed to help improve the exterior appearance and condition of the commercial properties within the targeted boroughs. The program's goals are to maintain historic and architectural integrity, improve neighborhood appearance, help property and business owners make exterior repairs that they would otherwise not have the ability to complete, attract new small businesses, and increase property values for all borough residents.

Eligible Properties

All non-residential properties and any mixed use residential/commercial property (including non-profits) located within the following targeted areas are eligible to participate:

- **Wind Gap:** *Along Broadway, Lehigh Avenue (SR 512), and E 3rd Street from the intersection with S Broadway to the intersection with Longcore and Church Roads*
- **Pen Argyl:** *Along Robinson Avenue, Main Street, Pennsylvania Avenue (from Slate Belt YMCA intersection to E Main intersection.)*
- **Bangor:** *Within one block of the core commercial district near the intersection of SR 512 and SR 191*
- **Portland:** *Along State Street, Main Street, and Delaware Avenue*

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

- a. The applicant may be either the property owner or a storefront lessee of the building. A lessee-applicant will need a notarized letter of the property owner's consent to participate in this program.
- b. The contractor is responsible for obtaining all required permits associated with the proposed façade project. Prior to any work relating to a façade project, the building's façade will be inspected in accordance with the borough ordinances to establish the scope of the work necessary to comply with the basic health, safety, and property maintenance requirements of the respective borough.
- c. The property may not have any outstanding municipal debt, including but not limited to, borough and county taxes, utilities, or other municipal liens.
- d. The applicant must submit a completed application and fulfill the approval process prior to beginning the project. Any construction started before the application and approval process will be ineligible for a grant.

- e. A project must enhance the primary façade, which is any side of the building facing a public street. Buildings situated on street corners with facades facing two public streets or those facing a street and a public space, such as a park, may be eligible for two façade grants.
- f. The proposed project must seek to improve the physical appearance of the structure in accordance with the applicable design principles or guidelines established for this purpose.
- g. A property which benefited from a façade grant in the last 10 years may be allowed to participate in the program upon determination by the SBR Staff as to the property's current state-of-repair with approval by the SBR Vibrant Economic Climate Committee.

Terms of the Grant

Non-residential or mixed use commercial/residential properties are eligible for up to a \$7,500 grant with a 1:1 cash match, or up to a \$10,000 grant with a 1.5:1 cash match. The cash match must be paid to CACLV prior to the beginning of the construction. Other incentives can be taken into consideration with the approval of the Steering Committee on recommendation by the Vibrant Economic Climate subcommittee.

The applicant is responsible for all project costs over and above maximum grant amount. The applicant must pay match share of the project to CACLV before any work can begin. The contractor will be paid in two increments, 80% paid according to work completed on the specifications. The final 20% will be released when the Certificate of Final Inspection is signed by CACLV.

Eligible Improvements

All improvements must be made to the main face of the building that are visible from the street and may include:

- Restoration of architectural details and removal of elements covering architectural or historic details
- Cleaning and/or repainting of building exteriors
- Repointing of brick or repairing cornices
- Installation of appropriate lighting to illuminate the exterior of a property
- Removal and replacement of awnings
- Installing or removing gutter and downspout systems in conjunction with other façade improvements
- Wood repair
- Energy Star rated and historically appropriate entrance lighting
- Repair of deteriorated windows, sashes, sills, and framing visible from the street

- Replacement or upgrade of porches, balustrades, columns/supports, steps, or railings
- Replacement or upgrade of doors
- Replacement of miscellaneous façade items such as building numbers and mailboxes for a unified façade appearance
- Design assistance –Design assistance of up to \$1,000 may be included in the grant. Design assistance may include architectural services, historic preservation, and graphic design.

All improvements must comply with the program design guidelines.

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Removal of historic features
- Landscaping
- Roof replacement
- Business Signage
- All other improvement determined by the Slate Belt Rising Vibrant Economic Climate Sub-Committee to be inconsistent with the program guidelines

Outreach

Slate Belt Rising staff will make efforts to inform all eligible property and business owners in the region about this program. Outreach may include door-to-door canvassing, mailings, and phone calls.

Application Process

1. Applications may be obtained from the Slate Belt Rising-staff whose office is located at 197 Pennsylvania Avenue, Bangor, PA 18013.
2. Completed applications are submitted to the Director of Slate Belt Rising.
3. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. However, neighboring property and business owners who submit applications as a group will receive priority.
4. Completed applications will be reviewed and prioritized by members of the Slate Belt Rising Vibrant Economic Climate Sub-Committee.
5. If an application is denied property owners may request that the application be reconsidered by the Steering Committee.
6. Estimates for work to be completed will be determined after the initial review of the application.
7. Work may not begin until the application is approved, the owners have signed all of the necessary paperwork, and any required match funds have been paid to CACLV.

Project Approval and Appeal Process

- Upon completion of project, work will be inspected by municipal personnel for quality and compliance with code requirements and design guidelines.
- The inspector, applicant/property owner, and contractor must sign a form stating that the work was done in a satisfactory manner.
- If the inspector finds a problem with the work, the contractor must correct the problem before receiving final payment. Generally, 20% of the contract amount will be kept as a retainage until all work has been completed.

Determining the Scope of Each Project

The Slate Belt Rising staff will visit each property to assess, photograph, and determine the extent of work needed for the façade renovation. (S)he will then write-up the scope of work and estimate the rehab costs for the project, bearing in mind the budget for each of the façade improvements. Staff will then review the scope of work with the applicant/property owner, who will approve the written description.

Contracting Process

Slate Belt Rising will follow the contracting process required by each funder. At a minimum, qualifying contractors must:

- Be registered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Not be debarred or suspended

All contractors will be provided with exactly the same description, so that their estimates can be accurately compared. The lowest estimate will be selected, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as poor references, or an inability or unwillingness to follow through or schedule the work within a reasonable period of time. Contractors will be asked to provide the following information prior to being awarded the contract:

- Commercial general liability insurance
- Automobile liability insurance
- Commercial Pollution Liability Insurance
- Worker's compensation insurance
- Indemnification - the contractor will hold CACLV harmless to the fullest extent possible
- PA contractor's registration number
- EIN
- Three references from previous jobs

Should all the bids exceed the estimated amount for renovation, the Slate Belt Rising staff will notify the contractors of the situation, adjust the scope of work, and ask all of them to restructure their estimates. The staff will again review the estimates, accepting the lowest one. Should there be two or more estimates coming in at the same amount, the staff will rank

the projects according to the quality of the materials proposed and choose the one that would provide the most lasting improvements to the building in consultation with the Vibrant Economic Climate Committee.

The terms of the contract will require that the work begin within 30 days of the execution of the contract and be completed within 90 days of the execution of the contract.

Design Philosophy

This program is designed to highlight, preserve, and maintain the unique historic and architectural heritage of each borough to the extent that is practicably possible.

Rehabilitation Guidelines

Façade Materials – Wood Framed and Sided Construction: It is never desirable to put new aluminum or vinyl siding on street-facing facades of properties with wood framed/sided construction. For reasons of aesthetic appearance, historic accuracy, sustainable energy and environmental standards and material reliability, the following are the design choices in order of preference.

- Option A:** Replace with high quality, paint grade, wood lap siding.
- Option B:** Replace with cement fiber lap siding with a smooth paintable finish.
- Option C:** If original siding is intact under removed siding, scrape, repair and repaint original surfaces. Restore original details.
- Option D:** If cost hardships prevent options A through C above, then power wash and repair existing siding and paint. Restore as much detail as possible via paint scheme selection.

Façade Materials – Brick, Stone and Masonry Construction: It is always best, when possible, to maintain the original masonry surface in an unpainted condition. Stone should never be painted. Covering wood framed and sided facades with faux brick or stone (Brickote, Formstone) are also inappropriate rehabilitation techniques.

- Option A:** Gently clean and repoint existing brick, stone and masonry surfaces as per professionally recommended standards. Replace broken and missing pieces with similar color and texture materials.
- Option B:** If brick surface is painted, remove paint in professionally recommended, non-destructive manner. Repair mortar and brick as above.
- Option C:** If brick is intact (after inspection of sample area) remove Brickote/Formstone. Repair mortar and brick as above.
- Option D:** If brick surface is severely spawled, cracked, etc. such as to be aesthetically unacceptable, repair as necessary and refinish surface with specialty paint specifically formulated for brick surfaces.
- Option E-1:** If Brickote/Formstone cannot be removed without destroying original substrate, patch and repair as necessary and paint. Maintain brick detailing as close to original masonry as possible.

Option E-2: If original masonry is beyond repair to the point that Option D is not an acceptable solution, then Brickote can be considered as a last resort. The pattern, color and detailing of the finish shall be approved by the Slate Belt Rising staff in partnership with any professional consultants.

Façade Materials – Other Construction: To be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Porches – Floors and Foundation Walls: Materials should remain generally consistent with typology of the block and street. Orientation of entry should also follow the pattern set by original street conditions.

Option A: Concrete floors should remain so unless deterioration is extreme and replacement with same would involve considerable structural disruption to the adjoining building. In the latter case a “shell” construction of wood over existing concrete may be considered.

Option B: In *no case* shall pressure treated lumber be used as a finish material. It is designed as framing lumber for damp locations and insect resistance. In exposed use it warps, shows knots and does not take finishes well. Wood flooring should be exterior grade, tongue and groove type; stain or paint grade. Edge details should be designed to eliminate exposure of end grain.

Porches – Railings and Columns: Original materials may be wood, concrete, iron or masonry. It is the intent to match original materials wherever possible.

Option A: Non-original iron, aluminum and other metal railings should be replaced with original materials where possible.

Option B: Exposed concrete shall be patched as necessary with Abocrete synthetic patch material or equal. If color variation detracts from finish appearance, it may be painted with approved concrete stain.

Option C-1: Wood railings and columns shall be exterior grade finish lumber: stain or paint grade.

Option C-2: No PVC material shall be used. Heavy composite material matching consistency and finish of original wood (such as Fypon) may be considered if desired wood product is not available.

Option D: Original iron railings and columns shall be wire brushed, primed and painted as necessary to maintain original condition. Brass or other high-grade finishes shall be polished and protected with clear lacquer. Missing parts shall be fabricated and replaced where necessary.

Porches – Entry Stairs and Stoops: The material should echo the character, scale and finish of similar components of the surrounding street and block. In most cases this will be concrete since the steps are normally exposed to the weather. It is *not acceptable* to replace or cover existing concrete entries with wood. In *no case* shall pressure treated lumber be used to replace wood steps for exposed entry stairs.

Windows, Doors and Trim - General: The character of the neighborhood shall be maintained by adherence to the detailing of doors, windows and trim. Front doors and first floor windows especially shall be treated as main design elements of any façade project.

Windows: Shall maintain size and lite arrangement (2 over 2, 6 over 6, etc.) of original. New, insulated glass units shall be mandatory unless recreating special design features (sidelights, transoms, fan windows) renders that prohibitive.

Doors: Formal entry doors shall maintain the character of the street and block. Replacement with “suburban style” metal doors (oval lite panels, fake historic elements) shall be avoided. Use of storm doors with summer screen inserts is encouraged. No aluminum replacement screen doors.

Trim: Trim, sills, window caps and other fine details shall be of original design material. Aluminum coil stock shall not be used to cover original detailing. For properties with existing aluminum or vinyl siding, exposure of original painted sills, corner boards and trim shall be executed with exterior, paint grade lumber. If wood is not available a composite material (such as Fypon) can be considered.

Façade Color Palette: One or more design consultants shall meet with the grant recipient to come to a consensus on a paint scheme that both serves the building well and accentuates the context and character of the neighborhood. The consultant(s) shall work with the grant applicant to achieve a design appropriate to all concerns.