



## **8MBA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW & DESIGN GUIDELINES**



## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION..... 3

GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW ..... 3

Eligible Improvements ..... 3

Ineligible Improvements ..... 4

Application Process ..... 4

Architectural Terms Defined ..... 5

Components of a Traditional Storefront Defined ..... 6

Components of the Upper Façade Defined..... 6

DESIGN GUIDELINES OVERVIEW ..... 7

Storefronts..... 7

Windows (Display, Transom & Upper Façade) ..... 8

Doors & Entrances..... 9

Security Features..... 9

Signage ..... 10

Awnings & Canopies..... 11

Exterior Materials ..... 12

Exterior Color ..... 13

Exterior Lighting ..... 13

Building Systems ..... 14

Parking Lots ..... 14

General Maintenance..... 15



## INTRODUCTION

The Eight Mile Boulevard Association (8MBA) developed the 8 Mile Façade Improvement Program Guide to assist business and property owners during the façade renovation process. These design guidelines are meant to encourage quality design along Eight Mile and strengthen the corridor by addressing issues that business and property owners face in planning commercial building improvements.

This document outlines the components of a typical building façade, as well as what is and is not acceptable. 8MBA believes that by encouraging a high standard of design, it will visually unify the corridor, thus improving the overall business climate of the corridor.

## GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

8MBA will provide architectural and façade construction assistance to commercial and industrial property owners along Eight Mile between I-275 and I-94.

All selected recipients will receive architectural assistance unless otherwise determined. A licensed architect, retained by 8MBA, will provide drawings, specifications and consultations. Applicants will be eligible to receive a grant to cover up to 50% (maximum \$10,000) of actual cost of eligible façade renovations. Applicants who are able to demonstrate an immediate readiness to proceed on the façade renovation will be given priority (e.g. evidence of financing from bank, etc.).

All successful applicants will be responsible for obtaining comparable bids from three contractors while consulting with 8MBA staff through the bid process. Once the work is completed, 8MBA staff will verify the renovation work was done in accordance with the approved plans. If the improvements match the approved design, the property owner will submit paid bills and signed waiver of liens by contractors to receive the grant reimbursement.

### Eligible Improvements

- Entrances, doors, windows, architectural detail or awnings (install, repair, replace)
- Signage (remove, repair, replace)
- Architectural features (accentuate with lighting, painting, restoration or replacement)
- Masonry, stone or tile for facades or screen/knee walls that separate parking areas from a public right-of-way (install, clean or repair)
- Decorative security fence (repair or replace)
- Barrier-free access (Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance)



### Ineligible Activities

- Interior improvements
- Sidewalk repair or replacement (considered when combined with a barrier-free access improvement)
- Roof (considered when combined with eligible façade improvement)
- Parking lot improvements (considered when combined with an eligible activity)
- Landscaping (considered when combined with an eligible activity)
- Screen walls that are required by a Zoning Ordinance to separate zoning districts

*The activities listed above are general descriptions. Please contact the Eight Mile Boulevard Association to obtain complete details.*

### Application Process

Note:

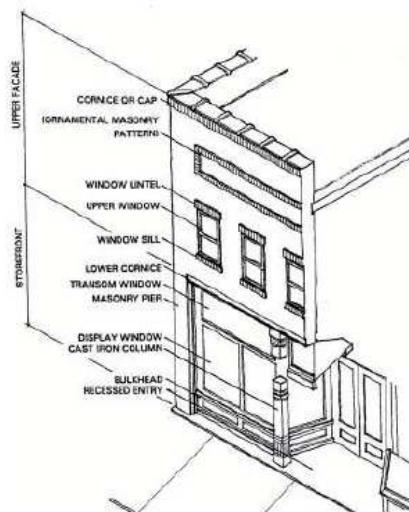
All applicants are required to be, or become a member of the Eight Mile Boulevard Association at, or above, the Bronze level (\$108).

1. Property owner submits a completed 8MBA Façade Improvement Program Application via U.S. mail, fax or email.
2. The 8MBA Review Committee reviews the application in house then notifies the applicant, by letter, if the application has been accepted for participation, has been put on a waiting list, or has been denied with explanations.
3. 8MBA staff will then forward a Notification of Project to all approved architects. The applicant and selected architect meet with 8MBA staff to discuss the project for 30 to 60 minutes. The architect will develop a design sketch and color palette in accordance with the 8MBA Design Guidelines and *8 Mile Framework for Unifying Elements* document. A memo including phasing with high and low ballpark estimates will be provided to applicant.
4. Architect submits design sketch to the 8MBA Review Committee for review and comment. 8MBA Review Committee meetings will be scheduled as needed.
5. The 8MBA Review Committee and architect approve design or provide written comments on drawings.
6. The architect revises the drawings (if necessary) and submits to applicant for final design approval. (For larger projects, the architect will then create draft scale drawings with cross sections, revised phasing schedule, cost estimates, elevation demo sheets, and typical sections of doors, display areas, trim, etc. and presents the drawings to the applicant and 8MBA staff in an additional meeting).
7. Using the architectural drawings and cost estimates provided by the architect, the applicant proceeds by securing three contract bids for the renovations and provides copies of those bids to 8MBA.

8. 8MBA enters into a Grant Contract with the applicant. The contract will include the cost of improvements, amount of the grant, effective start date, and expected date of completion.
9. Applicant enters into contract with the approved contractor. The signed bid estimate or contract will contain cost of improvements, effective start date, and date of expected completion.
10. Applicant will be responsible for the contractor's daily progress of the Project. ***Under any circumstance, applicant must immediately contact 8MBA staff if any alterations or adjustments to the final façade design are being considered.***
11. Upon completion of work, applicant schedules an onsite visit with 8MBA staff. The purpose is to verify that the work has been completed according to the design drawings.
12. After the inspection, the applicant will provide the following to 8MBA staff:
  - A. Paid bills,
  - B. Waiver of Lien signed by each contractor that has completed work and is paid,
  - C. Statement of Satisfaction signed by applicant,
  - D. Copies of required permits by Buildings & Safety Engineering Department, and a Certificate of Acceptance from the Building Department when necessary, and
  - E. Request for Payment.
13. 8MBA will prepare a check and deliver payment to applicant.

**Architectural Industry Terms**

Making exterior improvements to one's properties can be confusing, especially when it comes to deciphering architectural terms. In order to help you navigate the architectural industry jargon, we've come up with a quick reference guide for commonly used terms.





### **Components of a Traditional Storefront Defined**

1. Recessed Entry – The entrance can be recessed to allow for protection from the elements and protection of sidewalk pedestrians from out-swinging doors due to egress.
2. Bulkhead – A bulkhead is a component of an entrance frame, which forms a base for a sidelight adjacent to a door.
3. Cast Iron Column – A column that is a structural compression member to support the load of the upper façade. The column, if decorative, can be exposed for aesthetic reasons.
4. Display Window – The display window is an assembly consisting of glazing and framing. It should be designed to allow for street and sidewalk viewing of displays.
5. Masonry Pier – The masonry pier is an arrangement of brick, stone, etc to form a structural compression element, similar to a cast iron column, to support the load of the upper façade.
6. Transom Window – The transom window are panes of glass above the display window and entry separated by a horizontal bar of wood allowing for additional natural light. The panes of glass can be operational to allow for ventilation.
7. Lower Cornice – The lower cornice is an ornamental trim element to finish or crown the storefront.

### **Components of the Upper Façade Defined**

1. Window Sill – The horizontal bottom member of a window frame. The sill can be made of brick, stone, wood, etc.
2. Upper Window – A glazed opening to admit light and air.
3. Window Lintel – A horizontal structure member, such as a beam made of steel, stone or wood, over the window which carries the weight of the wall above.
4. Ornamental Masonry Pattern – An arrangement of stone, brick, etc. to create a decorative pattern in the upper façade.
5. Cornice – The ornamental trim element at the meeting of the roof and wall, usually consisting of bed molding, soffit, fascia, and crown molding. The cornice defines the top of the building and emphasizes the relationship of top of the building to adjacent buildings.
6. Cap – The topmost component of a vertical architectural element projecting with a drip as protection from the weather.



## DESIGN GUIDELINES OVERVIEW

- All improvements must be compatible with applicable zoning codes, satisfy permit requirements, and conform to any other regulatory restrictions.
- If a building has historic or aesthetic merit, improvements should be designed to reveal the building's original style, form, and materials, whenever possible.
- In the case where original building elements have been removed or substantially altered, contemporary treatments are suitable. However, they should not be of poor quality, of temporary nature, or ill-suited to the area (e.g. vinyl or aluminum siding).
- High-quality materials should be used in order to convey substance and integrity.
- Façades should present a visually-balanced composition.
- Colors of exterior materials, signs, window frames, cornices, storefronts and other building features should be coordinated. Choice of colors should be determined by the nature of the building. The exterior colors of historic buildings should be chosen with their historic character in mind.
- Façades should relate to their surroundings and provide a sense of cohesiveness in the district without strict uniformity.
- Building elements, such as awnings, signs, doors, windows, and lighting fixtures, should complement each other.

### Storefronts

Businesses use their storefronts to make their first impression to patrons. It is therefore important to keep the following design principles in mind when undertaking a façade renovation.

- Most façades consist of an architectural framework designed to identify individual storefronts. Each storefront should respect this architectural framework and not extend beyond it.
- Blank walls shall not face public streets. Walls facing a public street shall include windows and feature architectural enhancements typically found on front façade of a building such as awnings, signs, windows, and lighting fixtures.
- Exterior renovations should retain the original elements.
- Existing cornices and/or building caps should be retained when possible and repaired as needed. Improperly installed or failed flashing at the cap may result in water infiltration, which may lead to deteriorated or missing mortar and additional water damage.



- Appropriate materials should be selected that complement each other as outlined in the Exterior Materials & Colors section of these guidelines.

### **Windows (Display, Transom & Upper Façade)**

Historically, storefronts were composed almost entirely of glass, which created visual openness emphasizing the pedestrian experience in the commercial district. 8MBA would like to encourage a return to this style of design as a means to encourage pedestrian activity and enliven the commercial corridor.

- All windows (display, transom, and upper façade) should retain the size and proportion of the original openings.
- Large storefront windows currently in place should be retained.
- Storefront windows should not be obscured with display cases that prevent customers and pedestrians from seeing into the store. The storefront should display products or services, local business logos, hours of operation, and/or public service messages.
- All windows (display, transom, and upper façade) that have been downsized or covered should be restored to their original size and proportions. If restoration of the transom window glass is not feasible, the size and proportion of the original opening should be maintained.
- When ceiling heights have been lowered so that the transom windows are above the new ceiling, opaque panels (wood or glass) can be framed-in to resemble the form and profile of a historic transom window. The transom window area can also be covered by an awning or used for signage (see awning and sign guidelines).
- Clear glass windows should always be installed; reflective or tinted glass is not recommended. There are a variety of glass products that minimize heat gain and loss without substantially affecting appearance. Examples of such products include thermal glazing with clear or Low "E" glass.
- Do not install Plexiglas or opaque panels, such as metal, wood, and/or other materials, to replace clear glass windows
- Safety glass is required when windows are 18" or less from the ground.
- When upper level windows are missing or are in need of replacement, the openings should not be downsized to accept stock sizes; replacement windows should fill the entire opening and resemble the style and profile of the original window. The original masonry window openings should be maintained.
- Under no circumstances should window openings be blocked in or covered with a solid material.



- Window coverings such as shades or curtains can mask unused upper floor space and are an acceptable alternative to blocking in windows that are no longer needed for lighting or ventilation.
- Fix broken windows immediately. Broken or boarded windows negatively impact business and the district.

### **Doors & Entrances**

- Each store shall be directly accessible from public sidewalks. Each storefront must have transparent areas equal to seventy percent of its portion of the façade, between two and eight feet from the ground.
- Primary entrances should be clearly marked and provide a sense of welcome and easy passage from exterior to interior.
- Doors in the storefront should use clear glass. Avoid using solid metal or wood doors in a glass storefront.
- Recessed doorways are encouraged; they provide cover for pedestrians and customers in inclement weather and help identify the location of store entrances. They also provide a clear area for out-swinging doors and offer the opportunity for interesting signage and displays.
- By federal law, new store entrances must be accessible to the physically disabled.
- Loading and service entrances should be located on the side or rear of buildings. They should be screened from public ways and adjacent properties to the greatest extent possible.

### **Security Features**

Balancing security for businesses and attractive storefronts along major streets is a challenge. Storeowners and tenants need reasonable protection from vandalism or burglary. The following guidelines provide both a high level of security without compromising the aesthetic appeal of the building façade.

- To deter crime but foster pride and positive perceptions about the Eight Mile corridor, rely on discrete security measures such as security glass, alarms, lighting and police notification systems.
- Window bars are not permitted under any circumstance.
- Burglar alarm sirens should not be mounted on walls visible from the street.
- Exterior lighting should be installed and positioned to prevent crime and deter vandalism.



## 8 MBA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- An exterior roll-down grill is not desired but if necessary should be as inconspicuous as possible and located in a conceal box with an awning and paint to match building wall.

### Signage

Signage and communication elements are those elements that are placed on the site, on the exterior building façade, or on the rooftop. These include signs with a business name, address, or logo, business or product advertising, flagpoles, antennas, satellite dishes and cellular panels. These are necessary but often unattractive components of business operations. The goal of these signage guidelines is to reduce visual clutter in the built environment, while allowing for reasonable signage visibility and responsible placement of necessary communication elements. Signage should in one or more of the traditional locations and should consider the following guidelines:



- Business signs should not be above main door (see municipal zoning ordinance for specific requirements). Traditional locations for signs on commercial buildings include: on a canvas awning, on the window glass or glass door, mounted flush to the building facade in the panel above the awning or transom windows, on the transom window area, or a small projecting sign oriented to pedestrians.
- Signs should be kept subordinate to the building and fit within the existing features of the façade. Signs should not cover up architectural details on the building.
- The number of signs should be kept to a minimum. Primary signage should be limited to advertising the name of a business and its main goods and services.



## 8 MBA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- Flat wall signs installed above storefronts should form a clearly articulated sign band and be integrated into the overall façade design.
- All signs should be made of durable materials. Generally, metal, glass, or non glare acrylic are the best base material for painted signs.
- Window signs should not obscure the display area and should be limited to covering no more than 10% of available window space.
- Address numbers shall be a maximum of 8 inches in vertical dimensions. The location needs to comply with post office requirements.
- Sign colors should complement the colors of the building.
- Temporary signs, such as banners and paper signs in windows should be used for short periods of time. Ragged or weathered temporary signage is to be removed immediately.

### Awnings & Canopies

Awnings, canopies and marquees serve many functions, such as enhance building facades and sidewalks. They unify the building appearance, articulate the storefront and entryways, and provide a surface to place a business name. Careful design including selection of shapes, forms, and integration with the building façade design are important considerations to prevent clutter and façade distractions.

- Awnings should not obscure the architectural features of the building, but should reflect the overall façade organization of a building, be consistent with local character and building type.
- The awning size and shape should fit the original masonry opening.
- Awnings on a multiple-storefront building should be consistent and relate to the shape of the façade's architectural elements. The use of traditionally shaped awnings is encouraged, when appropriate.
- Canvas and fire-resistant acrylic are preferred awning materials. The use of vinyl or plastic as awning materials will not be installed as part of this program.
- As a general rule, back-lit awnings are not appropriate for historic commercial buildings. If lighting is desirable, spotlights mounted on the building surface are more appropriate.



# 8 MBA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



**Recommended Awning Example**

## **Exterior Materials**

Building materials are an important consideration in how well buildings relate to each other and their surroundings. Materials should be indicative of architectural styles when possible; the inherent colors will often establish the basic color scheme of a building facade.

- Façade design should be complementary to a building's original materials as well as to those of adjacent buildings.
- Improvements should generally use traditional materials; contemporary materials may be appropriate if the design and composition relate to the context and other design standards are met.
- Metal or wood siding/panels, wood or asphalt shingles and dark or mirrored are not appropriate.
- Use of decorative concrete block, applied false-brick veneer, vinyl or aluminum siding, or any other type of imitation, exterior finish materials are discouraged.
- Terra cotta (including simulated fiberglass resign terra cotta), brick, coarsely textured stucco and cut stone convey permanence and should be used when architecturally appropriate.
- When using new brick, care should be taken to match the original brickwork.
- Materials used near sidewalks and adjacent to the building should be highly durable and easily maintained while compatible with other exterior building materials.
- The surface cleaning of structures should be done by the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods, such as chemical washes, that will damage the façade should not be used.



## Exterior Color

Color plays an important role in how well a building fits into its environment and should be considered when rehabilitating existing buildings. The following guidelines should be considered when selecting colors for your project.

- Coordinate color selections with the original colors of the building, the natural colors in the current building materials (e.g. brick and limestone). Accent colors chosen for color schemes should complement the natural colors that already exist in the building and its immediate surroundings.
- A typical paint scheme should consist of no more than three (3) colors- one dominant color for the building and two accent colors for the primary and secondary trim. The color of the predominant building material (e.g. brick or masonry) is considered the major body color. If the building material has been modified or painted, a natural color similar to the natural color of the historic material should be used for the body. Modest or muted color schemes are typically more appropriate than bright, eye-catching colors.
- As a general rule, it is best to paint materials that have previously been painted and not paint masonry that has not already been painted. If masonry has been previously painted and paint removal is not possible, the color selected should be similar to the natural color of the masonry substrate. The same is true for painted brick or stone trim.
- Accent colors should be used primarily on wood trim such as window frames, storefront frames and bulkheads, not masonry. Historically, cast iron and pressed metal components were painted to resemble stone, as were stone and brick sills and lintels.

## Exterior Lighting

Light fixtures are designed for specific purposes; they have varied intensity levels, coverage areas and cast different illumination colors. Lighting is essential for the functioning and security of a building and its site. It is used to illuminate the building interior and exterior, including parking areas, signs, sidewalks, and streets. In addition to providing illumination, light fixtures can be decorative when placed on a building façade or used to illuminate a landmark or a significant building, or to draw attention to special building features and details such as cornices or palisters.

- Use decorative light fixtures such as wall sconces to enhance building façade.
- Use goose neck type or other extended arm light fixtures to externally illuminate façade signs or sign bands above transom windows
- Use coordinated lighting design to illuminate architectural features, entries, sidewalks, parking area, signage and alleys
- Neon and flashing strobe lights are unacceptable



## 8 MBA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- Locate, aim and shield lighting fixtures so that they do not produce light spill, glare and distracting reflections



### Recommended Lighting Examples

#### Building Systems

- A building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems should be concealed completely from view from the street or sidewalk. If such equipment cannot be concealed, efforts should be taken to minimize their visual impact on building facades.
- Rooftop equipment should be hidden by a screening device so as not to be visible from the street and sidewalk.
- Avoid placing air-conditioning units in windows or any other openings facing onto the street. Units located in non-window openings are acceptable if they are flush with building walls. They should be screened with a decorative grill or other appropriate systems to the storefront design. Air-conditioning units should not drain onto pedestrian paths below.

#### Parking Lots

Parking lots separate buildings from public sidewalks, break up continuity of the street wall and can be visually invasive if not screened and landscaped appropriately.

- Parking lots should be screen from the sidewalk with decorative iron fencing, landscaping, and/or buffered by a low masonry knee wall no more than three feet high.
- If fencing is used, decorative iron should be used in place of chain link.
- Parking lot surfaces should be well maintained, properly striped and paved.



# 8 MBA FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



**Recommended Parking Lot Examples**

## **General Maintenance**

General building maintenance is imperative to the success of businesses; a clean, well cared for environment promotes a safe and inviting commercial district.

- Facades and roofing that can be seen by the public should be well maintained.
- Downspouts and other drains should be kept clear and well-maintained.
- Broken or deteriorated building elements such as signs, awnings, windows, etc. should be repaired or replaced promptly.
- Sidewalks should be clean and free of dirt, debris, snow, and ice.
- Window displays should be well maintained; remove out dated signs from the window to reduce visual clutter.
- Surfaces with peeling or chipping paint should be repainted. As a general rule clean and repaint storefronts every four to five years.