



Guidelines for the Englewood Storefront Improvement Program

Program Objective

Englewood contains a substantial number of historic and architecturally significant buildings representing the Old Florida vernacular. Many of these buildings are representative of the heritage of the community and assist Englewood in creating a unique sense of place. Englewood's older structures reflect the simplicity of a fishing village. The relatively low profile, one and two-story structures add to the human scale of the downtown.

The primary objective of the Storefront Improvement Program (the "Program") is to encourage owners of existing commercial properties to rehabilitate, preserve or alter in a manner that preserves, provides or enhances the portions and elements of the properties that are significant to Englewood's history and cultural values.

Program Goals

- Eliminate further deterioration of commercial properties within the CRA and the downtown business district.
- Restore and preserve commercial properties of special value for historical, architectural or aesthetic reasons.
- Conserve the existing commercial building stock.
- Build upon the Old Florida environment and Englewood's history as a fishing village.

Program Description

The Program will provide financial assistance to owners or long-term leaseholders for costs related to exterior improvements to commercial buildings or to the property on which those buildings are located within the Community Redevelopment Area ("CRA Loan"). The Program boundaries are coterminous with the CRA Boundaries.

The CRA Loan is a zero percent interest rate loan for up to a maximum of \$15,000 or half the total cost for approved improvements to the property (the "Project"), whichever is less. A Project consists of all eligible improvements to one property. Each improvement is not considered a separate Project. CRA Loan assistance will be provided to each eligible Project as determined by the CRA Architectural Review Committee on a first come-first served basis until funding is no longer available. The labor of the property owner or any volunteers will not be considered in the determination of Project cost for purposes of determining the amount of the CRA Loan.

The County shall forgive the CRA Loan at a rate of 1/5 each year on the anniversary date of completion of the improvements to the property (the "Project") and issuance of a

certificate of occupancy, if applicable, whichever is later. The property owner must maintain insurance to cover the cost of improvements in case of property damage during the 5-year period that the lien remains on the property. If the property is sold prior to the end of the fifth year, the balance of the CRA Loan not already forgiven shall become due and payable to the CRA.

Storefront Project

A Project shall consist of all exterior improvements to the structure on the property or to property hardscaping that improves the exterior of the building or grounds with the exception of: parking lot paving, structural improvements not contributing to the aesthetic improvements, landscaping, irrigation, other improvements required for the sole purpose of complying with Sarasota County Building Codes. The Project can include, but is not limited to: architectural or design fees, cost of Ownership & Encumbrance Report, painting, window replacement, exterior siding or refurbishing, doors, signage, decorative fencing, trellis, demolition needed for exterior improvements, awnings, shutters, exterior porches, decking and railing, metal roofing, exterior pedestrian friendly amenities like benches, lighting and pervious paver patios.

Property eligibility: 1) Property must be a commercial property located within the boundaries of the Englewood CRA; 2) property owner must be the applicant or co-applicant; 3) a commercial property that exists for the sole purpose of providing housing, such as, an apartment complex, condominium or a house leased for rental housing is not eligible for assistance under this program; 4) a property that has mixed use, i.e. office, retail, motel or bed and breakfast use and housing is eligible for this program provided that no more than 50% of the livable square footage is used for solely housing purposes.

In making improvements to eligible commercial properties, Program participants (commercial, office or mixed-use property owners) are required to utilize the Architectural Design Standards developed for the Englewood CRA or the Sarasota Design Guidelines for Historic Properties that apply to properties identified on the Sarasota County Historical Resources Map. The Guidelines can be located at <https://www.scgov.net/HometownEnglewood/Pages/EnglewoodCRA.aspx>.

In order to have their project considered for the Program, applicants must complete the attached application and submit it to the CRA Manager. Project eligibility criteria are the following: must be a commercial property located within the boundaries of the Englewood CRA; property owner must apply or be a joint-applicant.

Program Application

Generally, an applicant must own the property on which the Project is to be constructed. However, the applicant may be a lessee with a long-term lease provided the property owner is also a joint applicant. In such cases, the co-applicants shall be jointly and severally liable on all documents.

The CRA Manager shall review the application for completeness. With their application, all applicants are required to submit a copy of the requisite building permits, drawings showing proposed architectural changes, color samples, product detail sheets and cost estimates for the project (three bids are required). Structures originally designed with unique architectural features are eligible for the Program provided the applicant demonstrates how improvements will retain the original architectural design. Once the CRA manager has determined that the application is complete, the Project will be reviewed by the Architectural Review Committee to determine eligibility for the Program, revisions to the Project and the amount of the CRA Loan. All building materials and colors are subject to approval by the Architectural Review Committee.

The CRA Manager will coordinate with the Architectural Review Committee and prepare documents, correspondence and set up files for each approved Project. It is the CRA Manager's responsibility to monitor each Project and provide funding.

When properties listed on the Historical Resource Map are submitted as part of the Program application, the Architectural Review Committee will refer the Project application to the Sarasota County History Center for staff review of the proposed Improvements. The CRA Manager will coordinate with the History Center staff.

Application Review

Upon approval of the project by the Architectural Review Committee and, if applicable, the History Center staff, the CRA Manager will notify the applicant that the CRA Loan has been approved and arrange for execution of the Englewood Storefront Improvement Agreement and the lien documents. The Executive Director of Planning and Development Services has the authority to execute the lien documents. Only costs for improvements that meet the Architectural Design Standards developed for the Englewood CRA or the Sarasota Design Guidelines for Historic Properties will be eligible for the Program. This may involve certain renovation elements to be excluded from the program.

If the application is not approved for the Program by the Architectural Review Committee due to non-compliance with the Architectural Design Guidelines, the applicant will have a 30-day period to modify the proposed improvements. During this time, the application will be considered as filed on the initial date of application. If the applicant fails to submit a revised application within the 30-day period, the application will be deemed incomplete and a new application will need to be filed to determine Program eligibility.

Appeals Process

The applicant can appeal the decision of the Architectural Review Committee to the full CRA Advisory Board. An appeal must be filed with the CRA Manager within 30 days of the denial of an application. The CRA Advisory Board will consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the CRA Advisory Board is final and may not be further appealed.

Maximum Project Assistance

Property owners or tenants that control multiple properties will be allowed to apply for the Program once every 6 months. A property can contain multiple merchants. However, if it is owned by one party and is contiguous, all properties may be submitted in the same application. In this case, the CRA participation is limited to a maximum of \$15,000 for all of the properties.

Construction Requirements

All applicants shall, prior to commencing construction of the Project, submit to the County a written contract with a licensed general contractor authorized to do business within Sarasota County for review by the CRA Manager and a copy of the building permits, if required. Upon completion of construction, the applicant shall furnish the CRA Manager with an affidavit from his licensed general contractor and an affidavit signed on behalf of the applicant certifying that all persons, firms and corporations, which have supplied labor and materials used directly or indirectly in the construction of the Improvement Project, have been paid in full and that there are no outstanding construction liens on the property.

Recapture

Recaptured funds from properties that are sold within the five-year period will be allocated to the Program for additional projects.

Improvement Agreement/Lien Documents

The property Owner must enter into an Englewood Storefront Improvement Agreement with the CRA and the requisite lien documents for the CRA Loan. The lien documents will be executed by the County Administrator, or his designee.

Disbursement of Funds

Funds shall be disbursed on a reimbursement basis after all work on the Project is completed, the Project has passed permitting inspections, the Project has been inspected by the CRA Manager for completion, proof of payment for the Project has been provided and, if relevant, a certificate(s) of occupancy has been issued. Payments

will be processed within 14 days of receipt of receiving all required documentation. Funds will be disbursed to the property owner unless otherwise provided for in documents submitted by the owner and the tenant.