

CITY OF COOS BAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY WORK SESSION

Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE September 17, 2013	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
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TO: Chair Daily and Board Members

FROM: Eric Day, Director of Community Development
Through: Rodger Craddock, City Manager

**ISSUE: FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM
REQUIRED ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANT SERVICES**

BACKGROUND:

The Urban Renewal Agency has requested that staff look into adding a requirement to the façade improvement grant program that would require the services of an architect for all or some of the approved grants. Currently, the program does not require an architect for any projects. However, when reviewing the program with the applicant, staff encourages the use of a professional designer, architect, or engineer to provide building elevation drawings if significant changes will be made to the structure. Consultant services from firms providing design, architectural, or engineering services are currently eligible for reimbursement through the program. The amount of the reimbursement is for up to 10% of the total project cost to a maximum of \$5,000.

If the proposed project is only for eligible repairs to the building or their associated site which do not change the architectural features of the structure, drawings are not required. The required submitted documentation consists of digital color photos. Requiring use of professional services for this type of project may impose additional and/or unnecessary expense to the cost of the improvement. For some projects the cost of a professional architect could deter the applicant from doing the improvements.

Several large projects that have been done in the past as a part of this program using a designer include: the Empire Subway, the Ector Building, Gary Rifkin's building at 175 S 3rd Street, and the Bugge Bank Building. However, there are many examples of projects done without professional services, but with input from the Design Review Committee (DRC) such as the Hall Building, Elks Club, and Little Caesars. Our experience with the program shows that applicants for major improvement projects, with the exception of the Beijing Restaurant, have used licensed architectural firms on their own accord without this being a requirement of the program.

ADVANTAGES:

If architects are required for all proposals applying for this grant fund, the applicants would have the likely associated benefit of input from these professional services.

DISADVANTAGES:

Some applicants may not apply for the grant program because of the increased cost. Additionally, the increased cost of the projects may increase the amount of funds expended from the grant.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

If the Agency desires to require the use an architect, some options to consider are:

Option 1 Improvement projects of \$20,000 or more shall require an architect.
Architect shall be licensed.

Option 2 Improvement projects making significant architectural changes to the building
shall require an architect.

Note. We would need to determine which improvements would be “significant”.

Option 3 All façade grant applicants shall require the services of an architect.

ACTION REQUESTED:

While this topic is being discussed in a work session and while no official action can be taken, staff is looking for consensus on how the Agency would like to proceed. If the Agency desires changes to the grant program, staff will make the necessary proposed changes for consideration and formal adoption at a future meeting.