



## **Community Appearance Commission**

### **Salisbury Avenue Corridor Improvement Grant - Guidelines**

Spencer Town Hall • 460 South Salisbury Ave, Spencer NC 28159  
Office: (704)-633-2231 ext. 20 • [kharris@spencernc.gov](mailto:kharris@spencernc.gov)

#### **Program Overview**

The Salisbury Avenue Corridor Improvement Grant assists commercial property owners and business tenants, including non-profit, civic, and other community-oriented organizations, along the Salisbury Avenue Corridor and within the Main Street (MS) District (map available) with enhancements to building façades, landscapes, driveways, and parking lots. These projects can range from minor repairs and repainting to substantial façade and landscape rehabilitation projects and the installation of new pedestrian amenities such as outdoor seating, planters, awnings, café fences, and lighting.

Applications may be submitted at any time, but funds are limited each year (starting July 1). Submitting an application does not guarantee that the grant will be awarded. Grants are awarded for eligible projects by the Spencer Board of Aldermen after initial review and recommendation by the Spencer Community Appearance Commission (CAC), as funds are available. The grant is typically awarded on a 50/50 matching basis with a maximum Town participation of \$2,000.00 per project. This is a reimbursement grant. Funds are issued at the completion and final inspection and approval of the project.

All proposed projects must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Aldermen before any work has begun in order to be eligible for the grant. The Board of Aldermen reserves the right to accept or reject any request, require modifications deemed appropriate to meet the guidelines, and/or reduce the award amount from the full 50/50 match based on specific considerations outlined herein. The Board of Aldermen will not promote or reward poor design and execution, inappropriate alterations, etc.

## **Background & Purpose**

The Spencer Board of Aldermen has approved funding for the implementation of an incentive grant program to encourage property owners and tenants along the Salisbury Avenue Corridor to make improvements to the visual and functional aspects of their properties consistent with the Spencer Future Land Use Plan.

Salisbury Avenue is a primary gateway into downtown Spencer for many thousands of residents and visitors. With population forecasts projecting rapid growth in the Charlotte metropolitan area over the coming decades, it is likely that an increasing number of visitors will utilize the Salisbury Avenue Corridor and that their perceptions of Spencer – and their willingness to return and patronize local businesses - will be shaped in accordance with the corridor's quality and character. Strengthening the visual and functional aspects along Salisbury Avenue will elevate the economic vitality of the Town by encouraging improved goods and services, economic loyalty, mixed-use development, and new infill.

## **Who can apply for funding?**

- Any commercial property owner or business tenant located along the Salisbury Avenue Corridor and within the Main Street (MS) District (map available) is eligible to apply. A business tenant applicant must obtain the property owner's written permission as part of the application.
- Non-profit, civic, and other community-oriented organizations are also eligible to apply. A tenant applicant must obtain the property owner's written permission as part of the application.
- A project is deemed ineligible for funding if work begins at any point before the application is reviewed and approved by the Board of Aldermen.
- Owners of any property for which an application is submitted must be up to date on their property tax payments.
- If a building has multiple units, each tenant with a separate entrance may apply. Where a single tenant occupies multiple units, the tenant is eligible for one application per façade.
- Only one grant may be awarded for each façade per every other fiscal year (starting July 1).
- A property does not have to be occupied at the time a grant application is submitted. However, applicants for projects at unoccupied properties must submit a written plan and timeline of expected occupancy.

## What type of improvements are eligible for funding?

The type of improvements that are permitted will depend on the historic status of the property. If a property is located in the Spencer Local Historic District, any exterior alteration must comply with Spencer's Historic District Standards, which can be found on the town's website or by contacting town staff. Generally, improvements may include, but are not limited to:

- Exterior painting, repainting, and patching.
- Installation of upper-level façade elements such as awnings, signage, flower boxes, lighting, etc.
- Introduction of pedestrian amenities such as street furniture, planters, café fences, umbrellas, lighting, etc.
- Safe cleaning of brick/stone fronts or wall surfaces. (Method of cleaning must be pre-approved.)
- Masonry repair, mortar joint repair, re-pointing of brick.
- Repair and replacement of windows and doors.
- Removal of siding and exterior false façades and metal canopies.
- Repair, reconstruction, and/or replacement of original architectural details.
- Structural and cornice repair and/or replacement.
- Historic reconstructions, rehabilitation or compatible reconstruction of a storefront.
- Landscaping including sidewalks, lawns, and plantings.
- Painting of murals (including artist fees, labor/material/construction costs, and equipment rental).
- Roof repairs.
- Addition of a patio or an outdoor eating space (including furniture).
- Design services (architect, etc.) for façade rehabilitation.
- Parking lot and driveway improvements.
- Removal of non-compliant signs.
- Removal of dilapidated buildings.
- Limited interior alterations such as display window changes that are a necessary part of the façade design.

Examples of **ineligible** activities include:

- Routine maintenance.
- Tools used for repair work.
- Intellectual property that is not solely purposed for renovation (e.g., logo design, etc.).
- Unapproved exterior alterations to properties in Local Historic Districts, including Downtown.
- Improvements made prior to grant approval.
- Interior rehabilitation/improvements that are not a necessary part of the façade design.
- New building construction.
- Application fees, permit fees, and inspection fees.

## What are the requirements?

- All proposals must:
  - Meet applicable zoning and code requirements of the Town of Spencer and comply with the Salisbury Avenue Corridor Improvement Grant Guidelines set forth herein;
  - Application must receive a favorable recommendation from the Spencer CAC;
  - Application must be approved by the Board of Aldermen prior to beginning work;
  - Adhere to all applicable sections of Spencer’s Historic District Standards.
- Only exterior enhancements are eligible, and priority is given to improvements on primary street-oriented facades and landscapes. (Rear façades and landscapes are reviewed on a case-by-case basis). The cost of limited interior alterations such as display window changes may be included only if they are a necessary part of the façade design.
- Any proposed project within a local historic district must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission *prior* to review by the CAC.
- Improvements to specific properties are considered part of the real estate value of said property and shall not be removed or relocated. Failure to comply with this criterion may subject the property owner to financial reimbursement to the Town of Spencer.
- All projects must be completed before the end of the fiscal year (June 30). Any request for an extension beyond the end of the fiscal year must be approved by the Board of Aldermen. Requests for extensions must be submitted by May 1 and must be accompanied by 1) invoices of completed work equal to or greater than twice the dollar amount of the grant, 2) a notarized letter of intent and/or signed construction contract for work described in the original grant application, and 3) a statement from lending institution financing project, if applicable.

## How much funding can I receive from the Town?

- Competitive grants are typically awarded by the Board of Aldermen on a 50/50 matching basis with a maximum Town participation of \$2,000.00 per project. **However, given the limited availability of municipal funds per fiscal year, applicants are not guaranteed to receive the full 50/50 match. The amount awarded is determined by total eligible project costs and by specific considerations as outlined in the following section.**
- The final award amount is based on documentation of actual costs. Grants are paid only when the approved project is completed in accordance with the plans submitted with the proposal.
- A project that alters submitted plans without prior approval will be disqualified from payment. Designs not completed as submitted will also be disqualified.
- Due to limited funding, a single property owner submitting multiple applications for separate façades may receive lower than the maximum award allowed for each façade. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis given the availability of funds.

## Given limited resources, how will the Town prioritize projects to fund?

Priority consideration will be given to proposals that make **highly visible and significant design contributions** and which best exemplify the goals set forth in the Town of Spencer's Future Land Use Plan. The detailed criteria that are used to rank applications is outlined in Addendum A of these guidelines. These criteria may be amended annually in order that they continue to encourage best practices in streetscape enhancement. **Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these criteria in order to develop strong and competitive applications.**

## How do I apply?

Applications may be submitted at any time. Applications will be reviewed by the in the order in which they are received beginning on an announced date in the first quarter of the fiscal year and continuing periodically as needed until all available funding has been awarded. Grants will be awarded based on the comparative merit of submitted projects as determined by the review committee and the criteria outlined in these guidelines.

In most cases, the process is as follows:

1. Applicant consults with the Planning & Zoning Administrator to review application requirements and to determine if the proposed project is eligible.
2. If the property is located within the Spencer Local Historic District (which includes Downtown), the applicant receives a Certificate of Appropriateness from Development Services staff (for Minor Works) or the Historic Preservation Commission (for Major Works).
3. Applicant submits application to the Planning & Zoning Administrator and attaches all necessary supporting materials (see checklist on the following page).
4. Town staff reviews application for code compliance.
5. Applications are reviewed by the CAC at their next regularly scheduled meeting.
6. If the CAC makes a favorable recommendation, then the application proceeds to the final step in the award process, which is to be reviewed and awarded by the Board of Aldermen at their next regularly scheduled meeting.
7. The Town of Spencer will notify the applicant in writing that the proposed project has been approved as submitted or rejected with recommendations. If project is rejected, applicant may resubmit with recommended modifications.
8. An agreement must be signed between the applicant and the Planning & Development Services department, which is authorized to sign on behalf of the Town. The agreement will detail all work to be done and specify a time frame in which the work is to be completed, as well as procedures in the event the agreement is not followed.
9. Applicant may begin work.
10. If, at any point during the grant process, the scope of work changes (for example: the applicant desires for the approved design/materials/size/color to change, the project is unable to be completed as approved, etc.), the applicant must contact the Planning & Zoning Administrator immediately. Grantees are not authorized to make any changes to their approved scope of work without the review and subsequent approval of town staff. Failure to notify staff of desired changes in a timely manner may result in forfeiture of the grant in its entirety.

11. When work is completed, the grantee must contact the Planning & Zoning Administrator and schedule an on-site inspection. Same-day inspections cannot be guaranteed.
12. Grant monies are ultimately awarded upon successful completion of approved work within the allotted time frame. Approved applicants will be reimbursed for the amount approved in the application process. Applicant must submit documentation (e.g. invoices) of all actual project costs before any reimbursements can be made.
13. If completed work is in accordance with the application, town staff requests that a check be issued. The reimbursement grant check will typically be issued within 30 business days of the final inspection and approval of the completed project.
14. Check is mailed to applicant at address provided on application.

**A complete application must include the following:**

- A completed application form with detailed explanation of project;
- Any design schematics, site plans, drawings or renderings, color charts, artwork or materials samples necessary for the Community Appearance Commission to fully understand the scope of the proposal. The burden is on the applicant to provide all necessary design documentation relative to the project;
- Price quotes from contractors (or a list of materials with price estimates) covering the full extent of the work;
- Certificate of Appropriateness (if the property is in the Spencer Local Historic District);
  - Projects classified as Minor Works may be approved by Staff
  - Projects classified as Major Works will require full HPC review and approval. If this level of review is necessary, please be aware that the HPC has a separate deadline schedule which may prevent concurrent review and approvals of both the Certificate of Appropriateness and the grant application.
- Timetable for completion of the work;
- Photographs depicting the current condition of the project area (façade or landscape);
- Property owner's written permission, if applicable.

**If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Town Planner at (704)-633-2231 ext. 20 or [kharris@spencernc.gov](mailto:kharris@spencernc.gov).**



TOWN OF SPENCER, NC

# Community Appearance Commission

## Salisbury Avenue Corridor

### Improvement Grant – Application

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#### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/> Grant application  <input type="checkbox"/> Photographs showing existing conditions of the areas for repair, stabilization, or improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Itemized estimate <b>OR</b> a materials list including total project cost  <input type="checkbox"/> Project plans and specifications or other appropriate design documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved Certificate of Appropriateness Application, if in Local Historic District  <input type="checkbox"/> Property owner's written permission, if applicable
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#### APPLICANT CONTACT INFO

<input type="checkbox"/> PROPERTY OWNER		<input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS TENANT	
Name: _____			
Contact Person: _____		Telephone: _____	
Address: _____		Email: _____	

#### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Rowan County Parcel ID: _____	Current Use: _____
Address: _____	Local Historic District (if applicable): _____

#### PROJECT TYPE & DESCRIPTION

- Introduction of new elements (e.g. outdoor seating and dining, awnings, planters, signage)
- Landscaping or parking improvements
- Replacement/stabilization of deteriorated features and elements (e.g. doors, windows, masonry, pre-existing awnings)
- Removal and replacement of non-original, inappropriate features or material and restoring with original
- Painting and minor repairs

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PROJECT COST (Attached Itemized Estimate): \_\_\_\_\_

#### SIGNATURE

*I certify that all information provided in this application is accurate and that all work will be performed to meet the program guidelines, the laws of the State of North Carolina, the standards of the Spencer Development Ordinance, and the Spencer Historic District Standards (if applicable). Submission of this application does not constitute award of a grant or issuance of a permit. The Town of Spencer reserves the right to request additional information to ensure complete review.*

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Addendum A: Evaluative Criteria

Each application will receive a score ranging from one (1) to six (6) based on project type and quality. When there are more applications than funds available, higher-scoring projects will receive priority over lower-scoring projects. Additionally, lower-scoring projects are not guaranteed to receive the full 50/50 match. Applicants are therefore encouraged to develop proposals that will score higher in each category.

**POINTS**  
Select one per category


Table: Evaluative Criteria

<b>Project Type</b>	
<b>Introduction of new elements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pedestrian amenities such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outdoor seating and dining, signage, art, planters, café fences, umbrellas and canopies, lighting, awnings, utility screens, and other street furniture.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Upper-level façade elements such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Art and signage; window planters</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b><u>Or...</u> Major landscaping, parking improvements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Replacement/stabilization of deteriorated features and elements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Doors; windows and transoms; masonry</li> <li>▪ Awnings and other previously-existing pedestrian amenities</li> <li>▪ Other architectural elements and ornamentation</li> </ul> <b><u>Or...</u> Minor landscaping, parking improvements</b> <b><u>Or...</u> (for historic properties) removal and replacement of non-original, inappropriate features or material and restoring with original details and materials</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Painting &amp; minor repairs</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Routine maintenance. (Automatic disqualification.)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Project Quality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project represents an <i>exceptional</i> improvement to the quality, character, and economic development potential of the Salisbury Avenue Corridor by <i>transforming</i> a severely blighted/inactive façade or landscape into a vibrant, active one with appropriate and high-quality materials/elements; <b><u>or...</u></b></li> <li>• Demonstrates <i>creative and innovative</i> design solutions that promise to enhance social, cultural and economic activity and expand business within the Corridor.</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project represents a <i>noteworthy</i> improvement to the quality, character, and economic development potential of the Corridor by <i>improving</i> the vibrancy and active elements of a façade or landscape using appropriate and high-quality materials/elements; <b><u>or...</u></b></li> <li>• Project demonstrates <i>best-practice</i> design solutions that promise to enhance social, cultural, and economic activity and expand business within the Corridor.</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project does not introduce new pedestrian amenities or façade/landscape elements but does represent more-than-routine maintenance or stabilization of existing elements.</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project is inconsistent with the goals of promoting economic development, business expansion, and job creation and would damage, or not affirmatively promote, the visual and functional utility of the Corridor. <b>(Automatic disqualification.)</b></li> </ul>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Points (1-6)</b>	

## Award Determination

**Disclaimer:** Given the limited availability of municipal funds per fiscal year, the Spencer Board of Aldermen reserves the right to award lower-scoring projects an amount smaller than the typical 50/50 match and/or lower than the maximum Town participation of \$2,000.00. The CAC strives to ensure that the funding allocated by the Spencer Board of Aldermen is invested in those projects that most affirmatively promote the goals of economic development, business expansion, and job creation along the Salisbury Avenue Corridor. The guide below illustrates the general percentage match ranges that an applicant may (without guarantee) anticipate upon receiving based on the score that his or her project is assigned.

### *Award Determination Guide*



<i>Project Score</i>	<i>Matching Grant</i>
6	40-50%
5	35-50%
4	30-50%
3	25-50%
2	20-50%
1	0%
0	0%

*Please note that as annual program funds reach their point of depletion, the Board of Aldermen may be unable to award full funding to even the highest scoring projects.*