



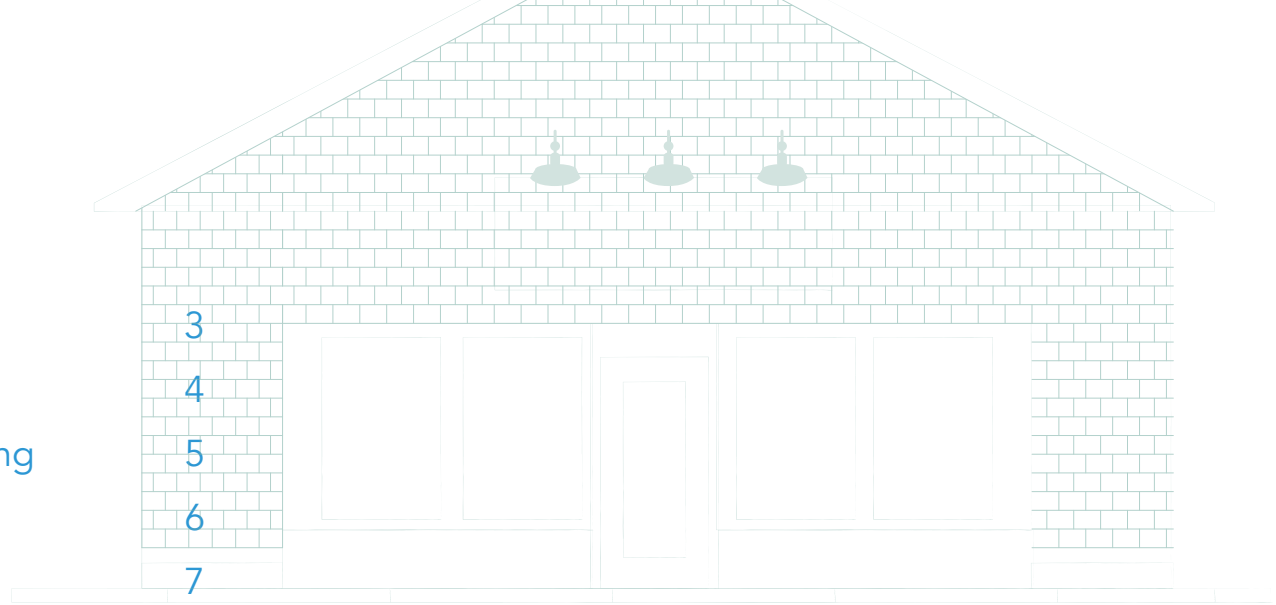
Medford Storefronts

Facade Improvement Program
Office of Planning, Development and Sustainability



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A storefront is the first point of contact a shopper may have with a business and can impact a shopper's decision to enter a store and make a purchase. According to a research study by Roland DG, 35% of surveyed shoppers across the UK and Europe indicated they avoid poorly maintained storefronts. Having a well maintained, designed, and properly signed storefront can act as a front door or gateway to increased sales and local commerce.

Therefore, it is imperative that a storefront and those neighboring businesses visually and environmentally define the character of a business district, while as a group, attract new customers and sales. Storefronts are essential parts of the City of Medford's streetscapes. Their commercial character underscores community vitality. These Design Guidelines provide a framework for prioritizing and designing improvements to existing and future stores and shops.

Because small businesses face so many challenges today, any help that can be given to them adds to their ability to thrive. This set of guidelines underscores how businesses should create a strong, creative identity for their individual stores. Likewise, this balance and harmony between private enterprise and street aesthetics underscores a notion of sense of place and a distinct sense of arrival. Strategically, the City of Medford's Storefronts Program was conceived to assist merchants and landlords with technical guidance and matching grants.

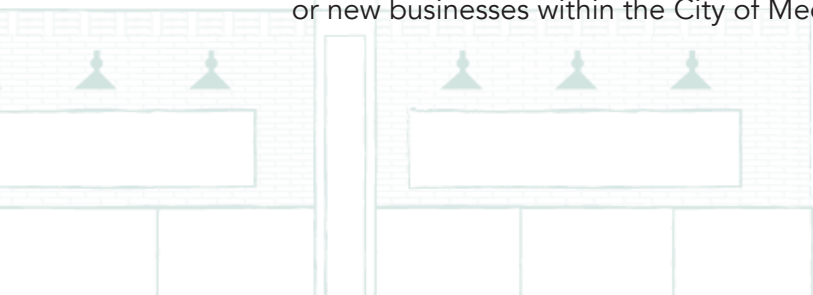
Based on "Best Practices" and practical experience, this document was developed to help small business owners and managers maintain, improve, and encourage the growth and vitality of their individual enterprises. Hoping to inspire future and ongoing businesses, here are clearly illustrated examples of how storefronts can be redesigned, improved, and individualized. These Storefronts Design Guidelines apply to facade improvements including both renovation and restoration as well as to new construction projects for existing or new businesses within the City of Medford's various commercial districts.

35%
of shoppers avoid a
poorly maintained
storefront

According to a
study from the Sign
Research Foundation

60%
of businesses that
repaired their signage
experienced a

10%
increase in sales



Key Element
Letter from the Mayor



**MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR BREANNA LUNGO-KOEHN**

Dear Business and/or Commercial Property Owner:

We are thrilled that you have decided to invest in your storefront and have been awarded a Façade Improvement Grant from the City!

Small businesses are a vital part our local economy. They contribute to our growing commercial tax base, strengthen our downtown corridors, and provide much needed goods and services for our residents. Making exterior improvements to individual business storefronts helps beautify our squares and increase curb appeal, attracting more visitors to Medford's commercial districts a creating a more vibrant downtown. A well-designed and properly maintained façade will clearly identify a business and highlight its unique attributes, while respecting the context of the neighboring storefronts and commercial district. By improving your storefront, you will not only benefit your business or building, but will also raise the standard for the commercial district and neighborhood as a whole.

I hope that this design guide will be a useful resource for you as you determine what improvements to make to your façade. Please do not hesitate to contact the City for additional assistance. I wish you and your business the most success moving forward and cannot wait to see your storefront improvements come to life!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Breanna Lungo-Koehn".

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn

Mayor's Office
Breanna Lungo-Koehn
Mayor
(781) 393-2408



City of Medford

Office of Planning, Development and Sustainability

City Hall - Room 308
85 George P. Hassett Drive
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

Contact:
(781)393-2480
Fax: (781)393-2342
ocd@medford-ma.gov

Dear valued member of the Medford small business community,

The Office of Planning, Development, & Sustainability is excited to support you in your efforts to make improvements to your storefront! Small businesses are an important part of Medford's local economy and play a vital role in attracting people to our downtown areas to eat, shop, and take advantage of all that Medford has to offer. Because of this, it's important that your storefront reflects the pride you take in your business.

As you use this guide to inform plans for improvements to your storefront, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Office of Planning, Development, & Sustainability with any questions. Our staff are eager to help you realize your façade improvement goals!

Sincerely,

Alicia Hunt
Director of Planning, Development, & Sustainability

Office of Planning,
Development &
Sustainability

Alice Hunt
Director
(781) 393-2408

Building Department

William L. Forte
Building Commissioner
(781) 393-2509

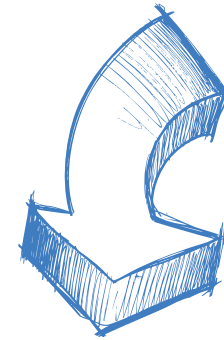
How to Use This Guide

The Office of Planning, Development and Sustainability has developed this guide to assist property and business owners wishing to make improvements to their storefronts. This guide also serves as a useful reference for property and business owners applying to the City's Storefronts Improvement Program. In order to access funding for eligible activities/improvements within the program, property and/or business owners will need to comply to the design guidelines contained herein.

While there are many components that make up a storefront design (see page 7), Key Elements are described in more detail on the following pages along with recommendations on how to improve these components of a storefront. Key Elements are also elements that are prioritized for improvement under the Storefronts Improvement Program.

Also contained within this guide are Case Study Designs which showcase examples of how improvements can be achieved to various storefronts - from simple updates to signage, to more complete facade improvements including lighting, painting and murals.

At the end of this guide you will find guidance on the application process to secure funding to help supplement the cost of your project. You will also find Quick Links to the Program Guidelines and Application.



Quick Link

[Click here to access the Full Program Guidelines for more information regarding the application process, requirements, selection criteria, and application.](#)

Storefront Elements

Parapet
The parapet is an extension of the wall at the edge of a roof.

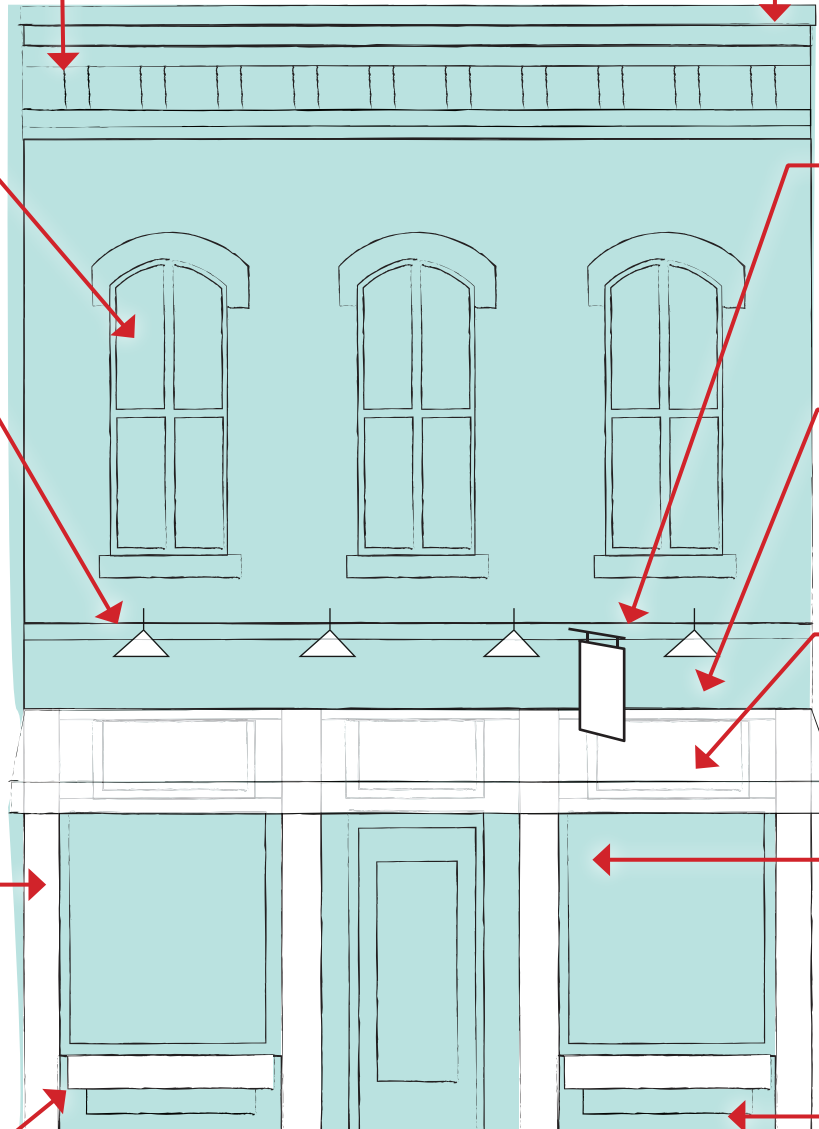
Upper Windows
Windows located on stories above the first floor.

Sign Lighting
Lighting intended to illuminate the sign elements within the sign band.

Awning
An awning provides pedestrian protection from sun and rain, while also providing shade for the interior of the storefront. It can also contain signage or other graphic elements.

Pilaster
Pilasters are architectural details used to give the appearance of a structural support or articulate the extent of a wall.

Window Boxes
Flower/planter boxes placed below the display windows.



Cornice
The cornice is an important architectural element of a building and helps define the top of the building.

Projecting/Blade Sign
A sign which projects from the building and is located near the primary entrance of the business.

Sign Band
The area above the first floor storefront windows and below the windows of the second floor. This is an area where a sign is placed.

Transom Windows
Windows located above the storefront windows or entry door. May be located behind awning.

Display Windows
Windows located on the first floor storefront that provide views of the storefront interior. Creative storefront designs can be used to showcase store items.

Knee Walls
The knee wall supports the display windows and allows for easy viewing of merchandise from the interior of the storefront.

Key Element

Awnings

Awnings are a storefront element that can provide multiple benefits to a facade. It can be the primary source of signage, protect customers from inclement weather, provide shading from direct sun and also allow for creativity and visual interest along a commercial corridor. Awnings can be fixed or operable and can come in many different shapes, colors and materials. Awnings should always be designed with high quality materials that can resist the harsh elements of New England weather.



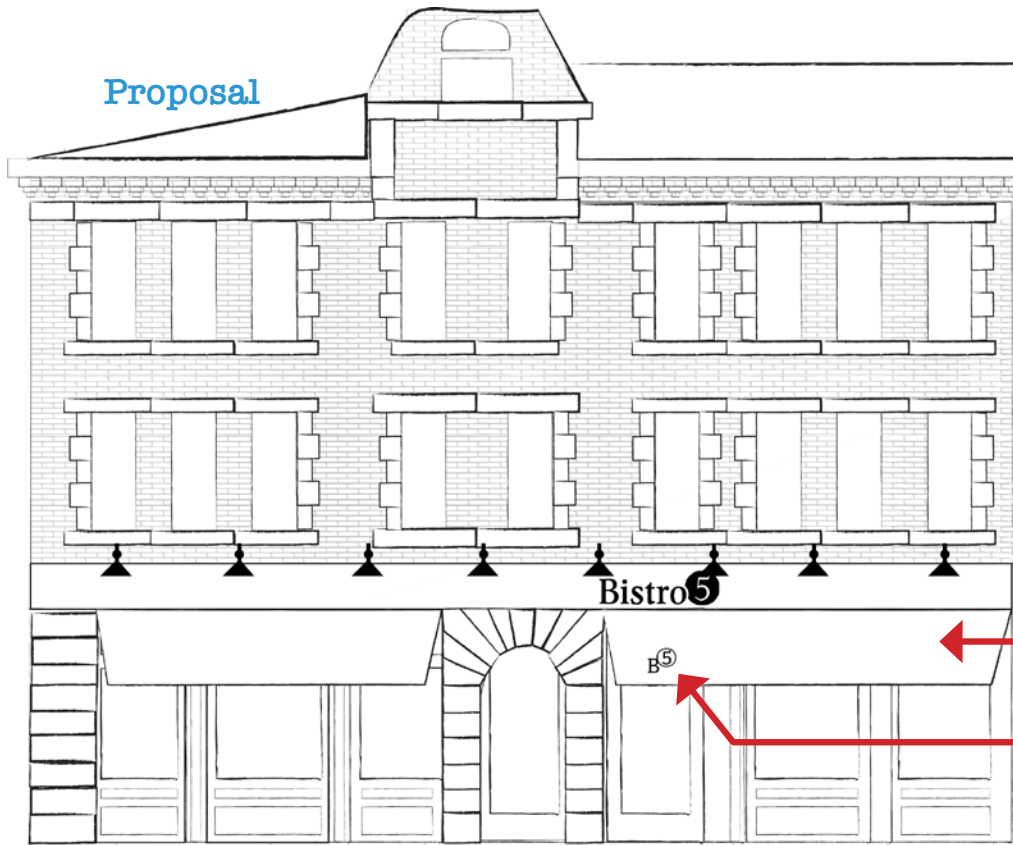
Recommendations

- Use materials such as metal, canvas, or acrylic fabric such as Sunbrella.
- Avoid the use of vinyl or plastic materials for awnings.
- Opt for awnings with open ends.
- Install awnings that are aligned with architectural features.
- Awnings should be an enhancement to the building facade and should be proportional with and complimentary to the overall building structure.
- Long expanses of awnings are discouraged. Lack of openings add confusion and awkwardness to finding the entrance to a retail, service or hospitality establishment. Therefore, multiple awnings should be used to reflect the door and window openings beneath them.
- Awnings should have a pedestrian scale and be placed so as to provide weather protection and/or business identification to potential patrons of a business.
- Awnings should be mounted in locations that respect the design of the building and do not obscure ornamental features over storefronts (i.e. rooflines, arches, materials, banding and other prominent physical details).
- Awnings may be illuminated with lighting above the awning.
- Down-lighting intended to illuminate the sidewalk is acceptable provided it will be recessed or cutoff to avoid illumination of the awning or create a glowing effect.

Existing



Proposal



Additional Requirements

If the awning contains signage, new and replacement awnings will require applicants to submit a sign design certificate application to the Building Department. Applications should be submitted through Citizen Serve. The application will be forwarded to PDS for review. If denied, applicants must appeal to the City Council within 14 days. Once approved, applicants can retrieve the Sign Design Certificate from the Building Department. (See Section Sec. 94-307(9) for additional requirements for awning signs).

Quick Note

All facade improvement designs for Medford businesses and commercial properties highlighted in this document are conceptual. Business and property owners may or may not choose to fully implement the pictured improvements.

New Sunbrella fabric awnings aligned with existing window bays

Optional Awning graphic/sign

Key Element

Sign Band & Wall Signs

Wall signs are located on the main frontage of your storefront. They are meant to identify the name of your business and to create visual interest. Wall signs should be installed within the existing sign band or sign area and designed to be complementary to any adjacent storefront businesses. Wall signs can include signs which are mounted to the facade with a sign board or graphics/letters which are individually mounted. Signs should always be well maintained and professionally designed and installed.



Recommendations

- Install and design signage that will fit within the original sign band area and located to not obscure architectural details.
- Place signs within the sign band to ensure a consistent alignment of signage among storefronts in the building. For buildings on slopes, signs may be stepped.
- Individually mounted letters/graphics should also be installed in the sign band.
- Signs should be placed below the cornice or roof line of the building.
- Opt for externally illuminated signs (e.g. gooseneck lighting) and avoid signs that are internally illuminated (e.g. cabinet signs).

Quick Links & Resources

[Choosing Signage for your Business](#)

[Sign Materials](#)

[Sign Letter Height & Visibility](#)

[Window Graphics](#)

Additional Requirements

Businesses are allowed one primary wall sign.

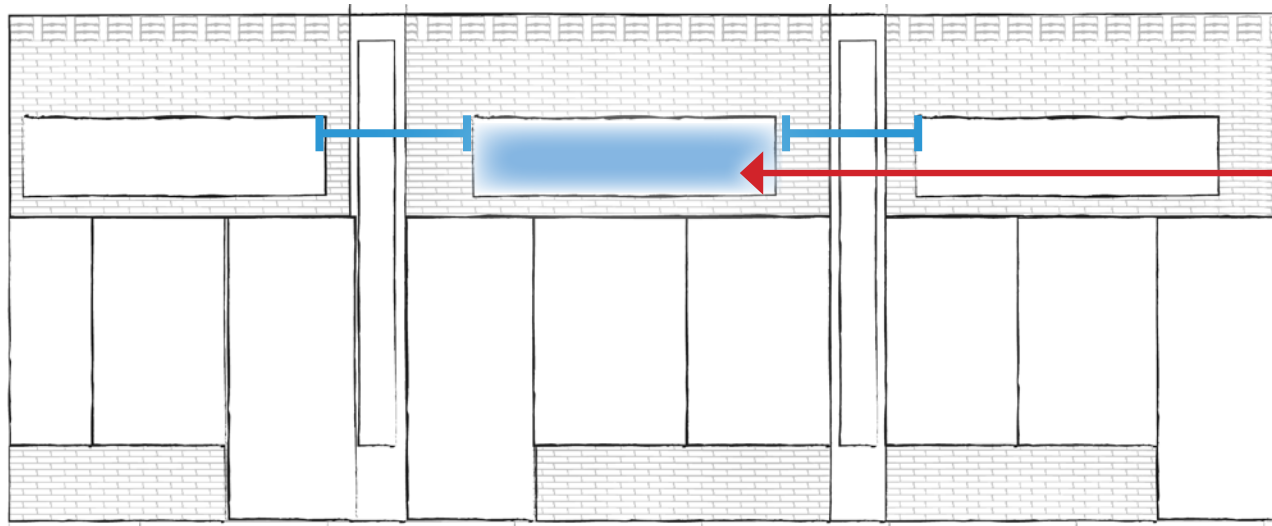
Businesses may be allowed a secondary wall sign if the building has frontage on a secondary street or parking lot.

See Section Sec. 94-307(2) & (3) for additional requirements for wall signs.

Existing



Proposal



New Wall Signage within existing sign band area and aligned with adjacent storefront signage

Key Element
Sign Band & Wall Signs

Key Element

Blade/Projecting Signs

Blade/Projecting signs are signs that project from a building or wall at right-angles and are typically double-sided. They are designed to be best viewed and observed by pedestrians. Blade signs can be designed with various materials, however, brackets should be designed to minimize swinging or movement of the sign.

Recommendations

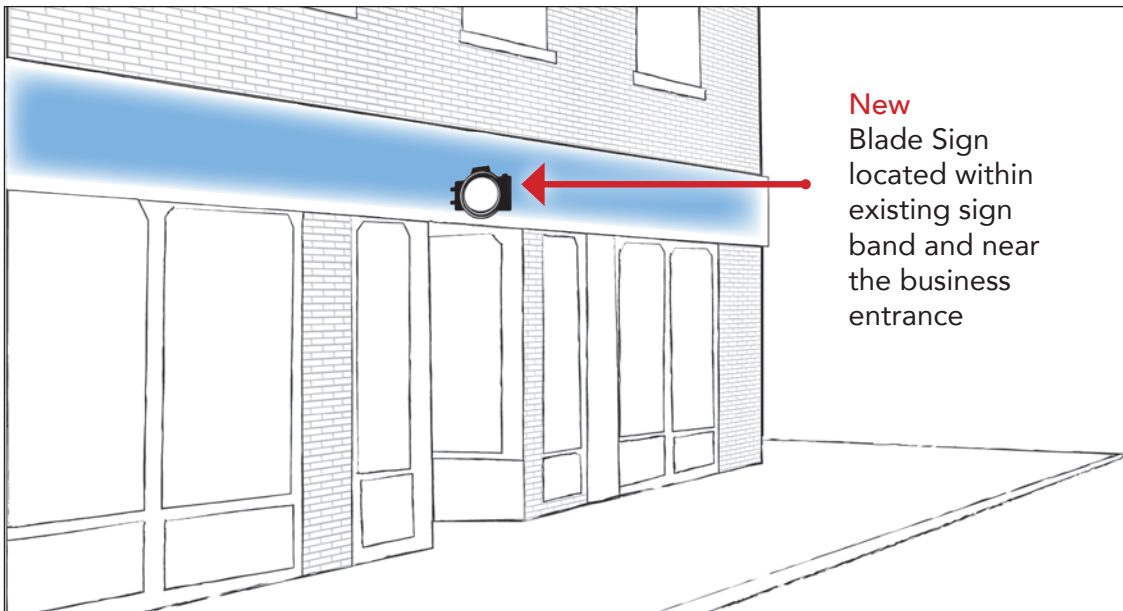
- Design the sign with two identical faces on each side.
- Locate the sign within close proximity of the business entrance.
- Mount signs that are at least 8-ft in height from the sidewalk.
- Use methods of external illumination such as gooseneck lighting.
- Internally illuminated signs are not preferred.
- Avoid affixing the sign into architectural features that cannot be repaired.
- Design the sign such that it will not result in excessive swing motion due to high winds.



Existing



Proposal



Additional Requirements

Businesses are allowed one blade/projecting sign.

Sign size may be up to 4 square feet in area.

The bottom of the sign shall be at least 10 feet above grade.

See Section Sec. 94-307(4) for additional requirements for blade/projecting signs.

Key Element

Lighting

Lighting is to be used to illuminate signage, storefront entries, and interior space (including dining areas or retail areas). Lighting can also be used to highlight architectural details or bring attention to a certain building element. When done effectively, lighting can draw customers in and create a warming feel.

Lighting methods should take into consideration the design of your storefront, building character, signage needs and neighborhood context.

Recommendations

- Use lighting that attracts attention to signs and storefront entrances.
- Choose lighting that will direct downward instead of uplighting to avoid shine or spillover into any residential units above storefronts.
- Ensure the style and type of lighting will fit within the area above the sign band or awning.
- Avoid installation of lighting that has exposed conduit or electrical wiring.



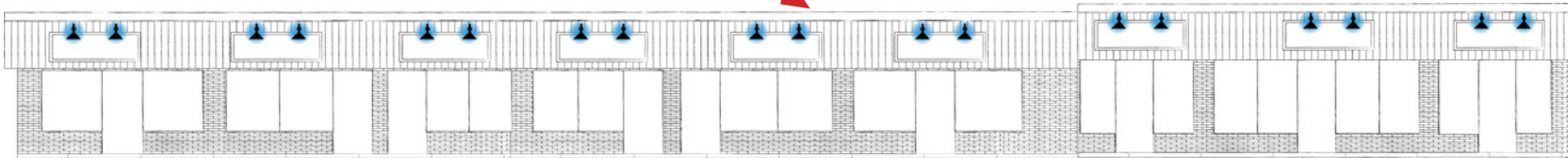
Additional Requirements

Businesses and property owners adding lighting to their storefront will be required to submit an application for an Electrical Permit to the Building Department via Citizen Serve.

Existing



Proposal



New Lighting directed downward to illuminate signage. Lighting fixture type is consistent between storefronts.

Key Element

Windows & Window Signs

Windows are the primary way customers can see what is for sale or what services are provided. It is ideal to leave windows free from clutter so that customers can easily see what is inside. However, window signs and graphics are a great way to add visual interest and character to a storefront. Window signs are applied directly to the window and are meant to supplement other signage. Generally, these graphics are printed as vinyl transfers and placed as a band along the display windows. It is a great way for businesses to state their hours of operations, services, or phone number, but should not block view into the storefront.

Recommendations

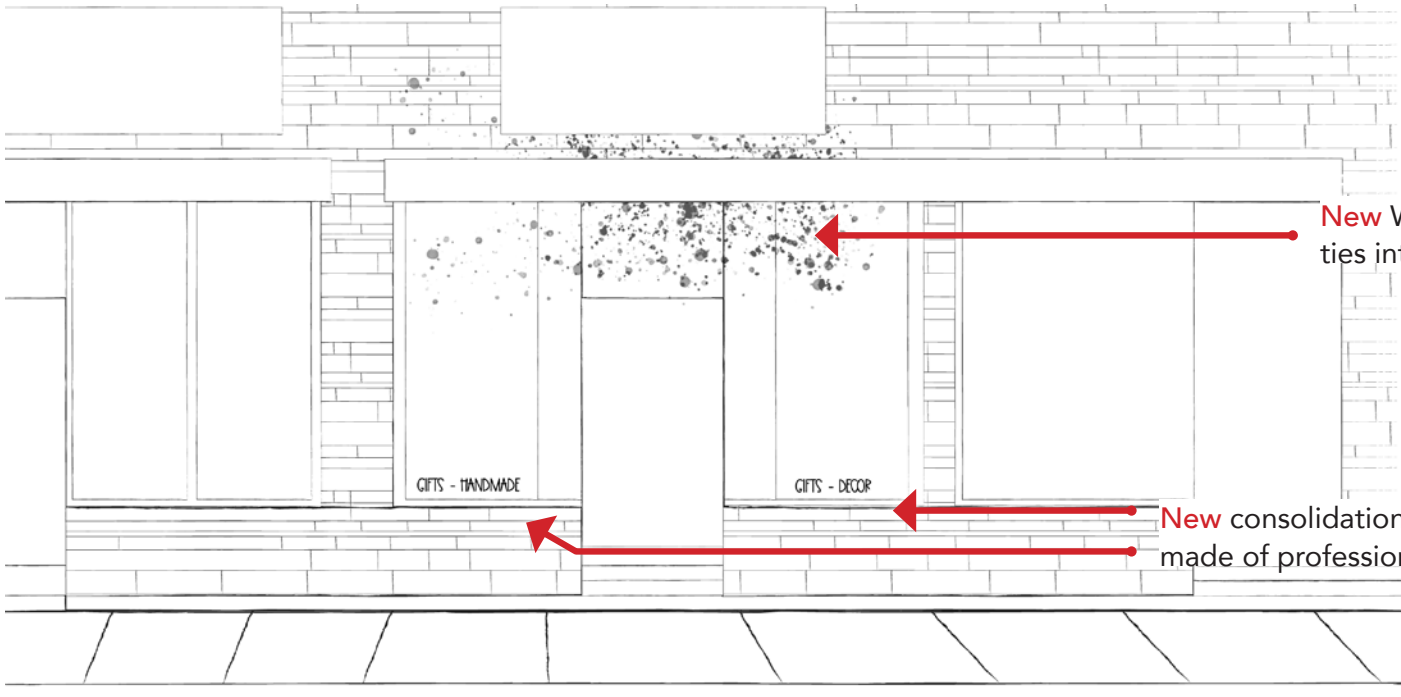
- Window glass should be installed with transparent glass (not tinted or textured).
- Maintain 65% clear class by limiting the number or size of your window signs.
- Windows should not be blocked with shelving or other merchandise.
- Avoid installing lowered or drop ceilings that block windows.
- Opt to preserve historic or decorative molding and frames.
- Use high quality aluminum for aluminum storefronts.
- Use professionally designed window graphics to enhance your storefront.



Additional Requirements

Applicants must submit a sign design certificate application to the Building Department. Applications should be submitted through Citizen Serve. The application will be forwarded to PDS for review. If denied, applicants must appeal to the City Council within 14 days. Once approved, applicants can retrieve the Sign Design Certificate from the Building Department.

Example



New Window Graphic that ties into facade paint

New consolidation of Window Graphics/Signs made of professional vinyl or painted graphics

Key Element
Window & Window Signs

Key Element

Window Boxes

When available, window boxes can be added as a way to add detail and interest to a storefront. They can be used to add color, promote seasonality and create a lively and welcoming entrance. Window boxes should be located and installed just under the first floor storefront windows.

Recommendations

- Use durable and strong materials for window boxes.
- Use native plants and be aware of how much sun the boxes will receive.
- Establish a watering schedule with store employees.
- Regularly check boxes for trash or debris.
- Replace window boxes when damaged.
- Boxes should be installed in a way that does not block building details or signage.



Additional Requirements

There must be a minimum 4ft continuous path of travel along the sidewalk. Placement of window boxes should allow for clear path of travel and not impede pedestrian activity.



The facade of your storefront is the first impression a customer will have about your business. It is important to maintain the storefront and facade to make it inviting and welcoming to attract people into the store. Facade design and aesthetics also contribute to the character or look and feel of a neighborhood. So it is important to recognize the existing buildings and neighborhood design context when making changes to an existing facade, or designing a whole new storefront.

Recommendations

- Maintain existing or original materials and decorative/historic details when possible.
- If original materials or decorative historic details cannot be maintained, they should be replaced in a manner to match as closely as possible.
- Brick and masonry should be cleaned (Note: perform a test patch prior to using a chemical cleaner to ensure it will not damage the facade).
- Brick repairs should be done with tuck-pointing and with a matching color.
- Any blocked or filled-in windows should be restored, including transom windows.
- Cracked or broken windows should be replaced.
- Storefront windows should be located and maintained in their original locations or compliment adjacent storefront window heights.
- Knee walls should be maintained and any rotting materials be replaced.
- Electrical conduit should be concealed behind the facade during renovations.



Additional Requirements

Depending on the scope of improvements, businesses and property owners repairing their storefront will be required to submit an application for a Building Permit to the Building Department via Citizen Serve.

Example

Case Study

The Goal

To improve the overall appearance of the facade with new paint, signage and lighting.

Proposal

- Painting of wood facade in color representative of the brand
- Painting of brick to complement branded colors
- Installation of new wall and blade signs
- Painting of facade murals
- Installation of new gooseneck lighting

Existing



Proposal

New Gooseneck Lighting
New Blade Sign



New Wall Sign
New Wall Murals

New Wall Murals



New Gooseneck Lighting
New Wall Sign

Example

Case Study

The Goal

To update and improve signage for the business with a new awning, wall and blade signs.

Proposal

- Installation of new storefront wall and blade signage
- New storefront awning and sign lighting
- Sign size is to be consistent with the scale and placement of adjacent storefront signage

Existing



Proposal

New
Projecting/
Blade Sign
at entrance



New Gooseneck Lighting

New Primary Wall Sign

New Metal Awning

Example

Case Study

Existing



The Goal

To improve consistency between storefronts within this commercial building through upgraded signage, awnings, and lighting.

Proposal

- New black fabric or sunbrella awnings for Jade Spa & Lady Chic
- Painting of existing sign boards black
- New logo/sign for FiorItaly
- Secondary wall sign to meet size requirements in Sign Ordinance
- Replacement of banner with fabric or sunbrella banner (note: one banner to be removed)
- New gooseneck lights over new awnings
- Painting of new wall mural

Proposal

New Black Canvas
Awnings for
Signage



New Secondary Wall Sign

New Blade
Sign/Banner



Painting pink
facade black



New Primary Wall Sign

New Mural

FiorItaly received Council approval
for their second Blade Sign

Example

Case Study

Existing



The Goal

To provide clear wall signage and window decals for the new business establishment that will compliment the new painted facade.

Proposal

- New wall sign consisting of black lettering and graphics (board mounted or individually mounted)
- Installation of new window decals

Proposal



New Wall Sign

New Window Decals

Example

Case Study

Existing - Front



The Goal

To update the front and rear facades with branding/signage for the new restaurant "Vault".

Proposal

- Install new signage on front facade
- Paint new mural on rear facade

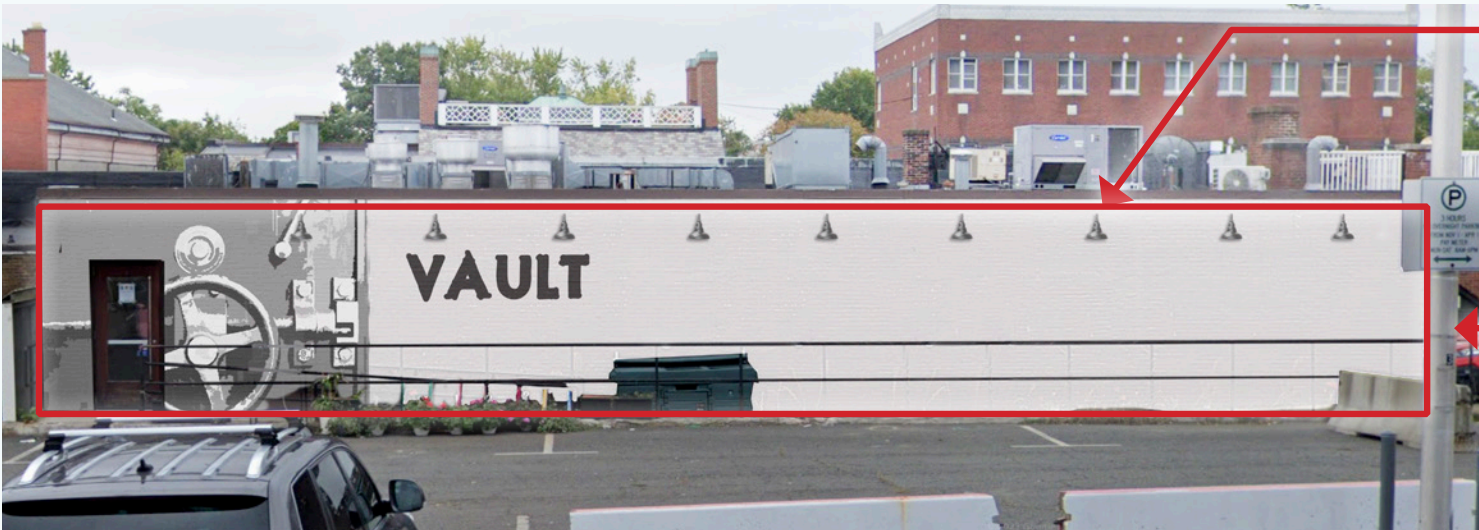
Existing - Rear



Proposal



New Wall Sign to be illuminated at night



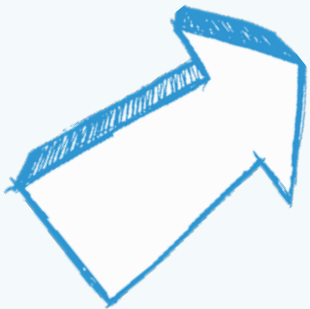
New Gooseneck lighting

New Wall Mural to be painted over existing paint

Example

Case Study

After Installation Front View



After Installation Rear View



Application Process

The City of Medford started the Storefronts facade grant program in 2022. The matching grant program provides up to \$5,000 per storefront in funding for eligible facade improvements. [Visit the Storefronts](#) webpage for more information regarding the grant program and to find out when the next round of applications opens.

Step 1

Property and business owners may fill out and submit the Storefronts Grant application form.

The City will review applications and notify business owners who have been awarded a grant.

Step 2

Successful applicants who receive award notification will then work with the designated urban design consultant to produce design drawings and review bids. Applicants will also seek local Historic Preservation Commission approval if needed. Once design and project scope are finalized, grantees will receive an executed notice to proceed.

Step 3

Work may begin after all required permits and approvals have been granted.

Step 4

Once the project is completed, the applicant may request reimbursement. The business/property owner shall submit invoices and proof of payment for the work to the City of Medford. The City will then perform an inspection to determine that the work was completed in accordance with the original grant application and cost estimates.

Step 5

Upon a satisfactory inspection, the reimbursement will be approved and processed.

Eligible Activities

Eligible uses of facade grant funds are improvements to the exteriors of existing buildings, subject to review and approval.

The following improvements are eligible:

- Painting of all visible surfaces of exterior walls
- Repair, removal or replacement of exterior lighting fixtures
- Repair or replacement of awnings
- Removal, repair or replacement of exterior signs
- Minor repair of exterior damage in some cases
- Window boxes
- Window signage/affixed window treatments, not to exceed 35% coverage



Quick Link

[Click here to Access the Full Program Guidelines for more information regarding the application process, requirements and selection criteria.](#)

Ineligible Activities

Ineligible activities and improvements/expenses that are not eligible with this funding source include but are not limited to:

- Any new construction
- Interior renovations
- Costs associated with security systems, solar systems, or satellite dishes
- Purchase of property
- Decorative fencing
- Roof repairs
- Sidewalks
- Project improvements commenced prior to the receipt of a signed Notice to Proceed from the City
- Door replacement or repair

Application

MEDFORD STOREFRONT FAÇADE AND SIGN GRANT APPLICATION

Applicant Information

Select all that apply:

Business Owner Property Owner This is a joint application

Property Owner Information

Property Owner _____

Property Address _____

Property Owner Phone # _____

Property Owner Email Address _____

Property Owner Mailing Address _____

Business Information

Business Owner _____

Business Name _____

Type of Business _____

Business Phone # _____

Business Mailing Address _____

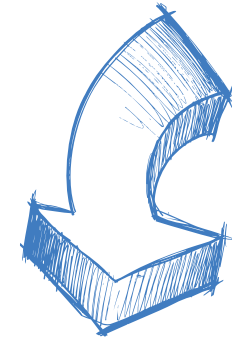
Email Address _____

Applicant Information

Please select any of the following:

- Applicant is an elected official or is related to an elected official.
Describe _____
- Applicant is a member of a volunteer or elected board, commission, committee
Describe _____
- Does the applicant have any known conflicts of interests?
Describe _____

Medford Storefront Façade and Sign Grant Program Application – Spring 2022



Quick Link

[Click here to
Access the Grant Application.](#)

Medford, MA

Search or jump to

NOTIFICATIONS SIGN IN HELP Select Language

Code of Ordinances

VERSION: MAR 15, 2022 (CURRENT)

REVISED ORDINANCES CITY OF MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

SUPPLEMENT HISTORY TABLE **modified**

- PART I - CHARTER
- Chapter 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS
- Chapter 2 - ADMINISTRATION
- Chapter 6 - ANIMALS
- Chapter 10 - BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS
- Chapter 14 - BUSINESSES
- Chapter 18 - CEMETERIES
- Chapter 22 - CIVIL EMERGENCIES
- Chapter 26 - EDUCATION
- Chapter 30 - ELECTIONS
- Chapter 34 - EMERGENCY SERVICES
- Chapter 38 - ENVIRONMENT
- Chapter 42 - FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION
- Chapter 46 - FLOODS
- Chapter 48 - HISTORICAL PRESERVATION
- Chapter 50 - HUMAN RELATIONS
- Chapter 54 - LAW ENFORCEMENT
- Chapter 58 - OFFENSES
- Chapter 62 - PARKS AND RECREATION
- Chapter 66 - PERSONNEL
- Chapter 70 - SOLID WASTE
- Chapter 74 - STREETS, SIDEWALKS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES

Code of Ordinances

Supplement 15

Online content updated on March 15, 2022

REVISED ORDINANCES City of MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS Codified through Ordinance No. 863, enacted August 17, 2021. (Supp. No. 15)

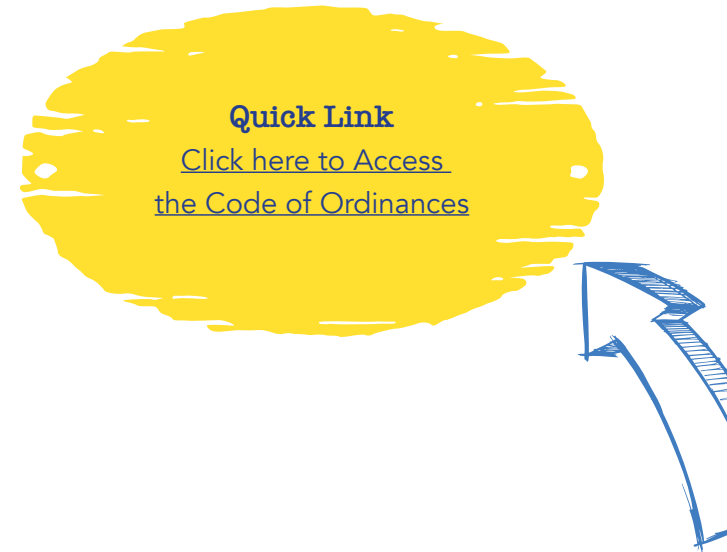
[VIEW WHAT'S CHANGED](#)

This Code of Ordinances and/or any other documents that appear on this site may not reflect the most current legislation adopted by the Municipality.

Adopted Ordinances Not Yet Codified

The listing below includes all legislation received by Municipal Code since the last update (printed or electronic) to the Code of Ordinances. This legislation has been enacted, but has not yet been codified.

Ordinance No. 869 Adopted 5/17/22	>
AN ORDINANCE REGARDING THE PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF POLYSTYRENE BASED DISPOSABLE FOOD CONTAINERS	
Ordinance No. 868 Adopted 5/17/22	>
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SEC. 74-114. - REMOVAL OF SNOW AND ICE AND SEC. 38-54 - SEVERABILITY.	
Ordinance No. 867 Adopted 3/22/22	>
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 94, ZONING THE MEDFORD CITY COUNCIL ENACTED A RECODIFICATION OF THE ZONING CODE FOR THE CITY OF MEDFORD, TAKING THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS REGARDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE:	





City of Medford
85 George P. Hassett Drive
Medford MA 02155