

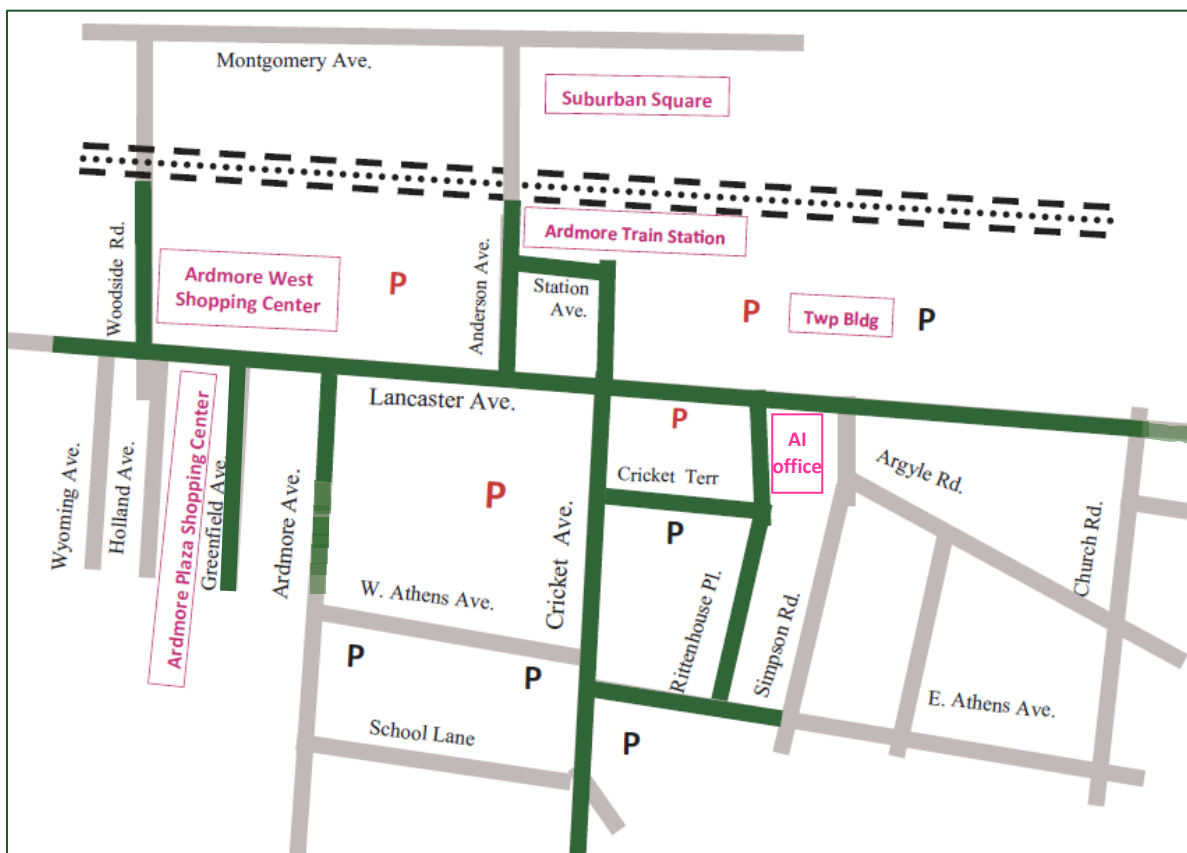


FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE BUSINESS DISTRICT AUTHORITY

GENERAL INFORMATION:

The objective of the Façade Improvement Grant Program is to encourage architecturally appropriate improvements of commercial building facades, to enhance the overall attractiveness of the Downtown Ardmore Business District. These funds, made possible through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development, are available to stimulate private investment in properties, foster an attractive environment, and preserve the architectural heritage of properties and communities.

Business or property owners in the Downtown Ardmore Business District may apply for a **50% matching reimbursement grant of up to \$5,000**. Properties that are not current on municipal taxes or The Ardmore Initiative assessment are ineligible.



Downtown Ardmore Business District Boundaries in Green

Priority is given to projects that encompass multiple facades, use environmentally friendly materials, and/or will result in significant improvements. After project completion, applicants may apply for another grant pending availability of funds.

Projects costing greater than \$25,000 are subject to state prevailing wage requirements. Applicants can receive more information during the pre-application meeting.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS:

The following improvements, when visible from the public right-of-way, are eligible for funding:

- Exterior windows and doors
- Exterior painting
- Masonry/brick-pointing
- Façade lighting
- Signage (installation and removal)
- Awnings
- Other improvements on a case-by-case basis

Improvements that are not fixed to the property, such as hanging plants or window decals, are not eligible or funding. Applicants seeking to correct deferred maintenance must propose additional façade improvements to be eligible for funding. Projects must be compliant with the Lower Merion Township Zoning Code.

HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (HARB):

Properties located within the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District, a subset of properties within the Downtown Ardmore Business District, require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Lower Merion Township HARB. **Applicants within the Historic District should apply for the Certificate of Appropriateness and Façade Improvement Grant at the same time.** A full-sized map of the Historic District as well as the Certificate of Appropriateness application can be found on the Lower Merion Township website (lowermerion.org). Façade improvements should comply with the Secretary of Interior standards for historic rehabilitation, which can be found on the National Park Service website (nps.gov).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Lower Merion Township's website provides guidelines to assist applicants, property owners, architects.

[Design Guidelines for Historic Resources and Historic Districts](#) (2023) to aid in preserving historic resources and historic districts. The guidelines clarify the HARB application submission requirements, and the review process and schedule, and includes a glossary of architectural terms.

[Ardmore Storefront Design Guidelines](#) (2006) are a tool to create well-designed, dynamic and upscale storefronts throughout the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District, to enhance the historic character of the District, and define the area as an attractive destination for shopping, entertainment, and socializing.

These guidelines can be found at lowermerion.org



*Properties located in the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District
(Full-sized map can be found on the Lower Merion Township website)*

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The Ardmore Initiative is available to guide business and property owners through the application process. Applicants should follow the steps below:

1. Arrange a Pre-Application Meeting with The Ardmore Initiative. Bring the application form, filled out as completely as possible, to the meeting.
2. Submit the following materials to complete your application:
 - a. Completed application form, including property owner's signature
 - b. Photograph showing the entire existing façade, from sidewalk to roof
 - c. Photograph showing the entire existing façade, including the neighbors on each side
 - d. Project illustration – professional drawing, detailed sketch, or printed photograph with notes
 - e. Two contractor estimates for the proposed project
3. The Design Committee will review the project proposal. The Design Committee consists of architects, property managers, and Lower Merion Township personnel with extensive façade improvement experience.
4. The Design Committee will either provide feedback to improve the project design or outright accept the project proposal.
5. The Ardmore Initiative will issue an official Award Letter.
6. **Façade work can begin only *after* receipt of the Award Letter.** Reimbursement is only granted to projects approved by the Design Committee and started after receipt of the Award Letter.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS:

The Ardmore Initiative issues the grant in the form of a reimbursement check after facade work has been completed. Projects must be completed within six months of the award letter date or funding may be reallocated. The applicant must adhere to the project proposal approved by the Design Committee to remain eligible for reimbursement. The following materials should be submitted *after* project completion to ensure reimbursement:

1. Photograph showing the entire façade, from sidewalk to roof
2. Copies of estimate, signed agreeing to cost and final invoices signed and marked paid
3. Proof of payment in the form of cancelled checks or credit card statements. **Do not pay with cash.**
4. Written explanation of significant differences between the estimates and final invoices if applicable
5. Copy of HARB Certificate of Appropriateness, if required

CONTACT:

For more information, or to schedule a pre-application meeting, contact:

Jane Murray, Assistant Executive Director of The Ardmore Initiative, at 610-645-0540 or Jane@ardmoreinitiative.org.

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