



City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.
Valdez, AK 99686

Meeting Agenda Beautification Commission

Monday, August 18, 2025

5:00 PM

City Council Chambers

Regular Meeting

WORK SESSION AGENDA - 5:00 pm

Transcribed minutes are not taken for Work Sessions. Audio is available upon request.

1. [Work Session: Future of the Beautification Matching Grant Program and Outreach Options](#)



Legislation Text

File #: 25-0376, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Work Session: Future of the Beautification Matching Grant Program and Outreach Options

SUBMITTED BY: Elise Sorum-Birk, Deputy City Clerk

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: n/a

Unencumbered Balance: n/a

Funding Source: n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The Beautification Matching Grant program has been active for many years, and small adjustments have been made to the application and judging criteria over time. The last major review of criteria took place with the creation of the 2023 application packet. Attached is a copy of the 2025 application packet for reference.

Concerns have been raised on issues of improvements that are seasonal in nature or removable. There has also been less participation in the 50/50 matching grant program for businesses in 2024 and 2025 despite robust advertising and outreach.

The goal of the work session is to look at the matching grant program as a whole and discuss ideas for what could be changed and how to get feedback from the business community on the program for the coming year.



2025 City of Valdez
Beautification Matching Grant Program

MISSION: WORK TO BUILD COMMUNITY, A SENSE OF PLACE, AND CIVIC PRIDE THROUGH FUNDING BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS FOCUSED ON THE AESTHETICS OF VALDEZ, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DESIGN, LANDSCAPING, AND PUBLIC ART.

IMPORTANT DATES:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17th - APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS

MONDAY, JANUARY 27th - MATCHING GRANT FAQ LUNCH & LEARN

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17th - GRANT APPLICATION HELP SESSION

FRIDAY, MARCH 21st - DEADLINE FOR 2025 GRANT APPLICATIONS

FRIDAY, APRIL 18th - APPLICANTS INFORMED OF AWARDS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12th - DEADLINE FOR REIMBURSEMENT PACKET

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS:

BY EMAIL – COVBOARDS@VALDEZAK.GOV

BY MAIL – CITY OF VALDEZ, PO BOX 307, VALDEZ, AK 99686

IN PERSON – TO THE FRONT DESK AT CITY HALL

2025 Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program

City of Valdez Beautification Commission Mission: Work to advocate for, promote, and enhance the aesthetics of the local human-built environment to reflect the beauty of the surrounding natural environment.

Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program Mission: Work to build community, a sense of place, and civic pride through funding beautification projects focused on the aesthetics of Valdez, including but not limited to design, landscaping, and public art.

The Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program offers a financial incentive designed to assist local businesses or commercial property owners in improving the business setting for investors as well as providing an overall upgrade in appearance for residents and visitors.

2025 will be the tenth year of the program and continues with the expansion of eligible properties outside the core downtown district.

The 2025 matching grant program's goal is to improve the overall aesthetics of Valdez through:

- Improving the overall quality of building/structure façades in order to attract more local residents and visitors to shop, eat, and do business in Valdez.
- Encouraging businesses to invest in additional aesthetic and design improvements including landscaping and public art.
- Encouraging and incentivizing property/business owners to reinvest in our community.
- Encouraging grant applicants to strengthen the local economy through utilizing local vendors, contractors, and materials.

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES:

Properties located in the following [zoning districts](#) are eligible to apply for funding: **Central Business District, General Commercial, Waterfront Industrial and Light Industrial.**

Properties may be mixed use but must be used primarily for a business purpose to be eligible for grant funding.

Properties must be up to date on their property taxes and may not have open code violations to apply.

INELIGIBLE PROPERTIES:

Properties located in the following [zoning districts](#) are not eligible to apply for funding: **Neighborhood Mixed Use, Rural Residential, Moderate Density Residential, High Density Residential, Heavy Industrial, and Conservation.**

Strictly residential properties, home occupation, and properties with delinquent property taxes are not eligible for the matching grant program. Buildings that are publicly owned or owned by a non-profit are not eligible to receive grant funding.

TIER ONE AND TIER TWO:

Eligible properties will be designated in one of two tiers based on location, visibility and whether grant program funds have been received previously. Due to program goals and limited program funding, properties designated as “Tier One” will be given priority for grant selection, however “Tier Two” properties may also be considered.

TIER ONE: Eligible properties located in the outlined area below **or located within 100 feet of the Richardson Highway corridor:**



TIER TWO: Eligible properties located within Valdez city limits, but outside of the Tier One designated areas. Eligible properties which have previously received a beautification matching grant.

GUIDELINES:

All projects must be approved before any work begins. Grants will not be awarded retroactively.

Property owners should be the applicant when possible. If an applicant is not the owner of the building, they must obtain the property owner's written approval prior to applying.

Any changes to the project after grant approval must be approved before work commences or the grant will be forfeited.

Eligible aesthetic improvements must be to the exterior of a building and may include, but are not limited to:

- Significant overall architectural or design improvements.
- Landscaping improvements – including artwork or murals.
- Removal of old signage and exterior clutter (including the removal of unsightly structures and shipping containers from properties).
- Facade improvements – i.e., signage upgrades, murals, siding, etc.

ELIGIBLE COSTS (WITH APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION):

- Materials and shipping costs for approved improvements.
- Costs from appropriately licensed third-party vendors or contractors.
- Architectural and engineering services.
- City or State fees and permits directly related to the project.

INELIGIBLE COSTS:

- Improvements commenced prior to application approval or issuance of notice to proceed.
- Improvements not specifically noted in the award letter.
- Improvements which are considered routine maintenance (examples include replacement of light bulbs without an associated facade improvement, pavement replacement without an associated landscaping improvement, etc.)
- Simple replacement of like items, such as a replacement of a sign with the exact same sign.
- Improvements made to previous work funded by a Beautification Matching Grant, unless the work is part of a phased beautification project.
- Repairs caused by damage to a building, structure, or property that should be completed through an insurance claim.
- Partial or full roof replacement.
- Construction of a new building.
- Applicant or property owner labor.

SELECTION PROCESS:

Total funding available for the Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program is determined by the Valdez City Council. Due to limited funding, projects meeting the criteria of this program will be presented to the City of Valdez Beautification Commission for selection.

Applications are due to the City Clerk's Office no later than 5:00 pm. on Friday, March 21, 2025. Applications received after the due date shall not be considered.

A complete grant application may be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by email, mail or in-person at city hall. This application must include:

- Detailed written description of proposed work.
- Sketches or drawings of proposed improvements, including samples/photographs of paint colors or materials to be used (do not need to be professionally drawn, but are required for application consideration).
- Color "before" photographs of the area or areas to be improved (submitted electronically if possible).
- Bids for contracted work (if applicable).
- Budget breakdown – including itemized list of estimated costs associated with the project.
- A letter/narrative addressed to the Beautification Commission explaining how the proposed work adds to the aesthetics of your property and our community.

The City may require more detail in order to issue permits after application approval.

Please note: Depending on available funding for the grant program, awarded matching grants may be less than the full amount requested in the project application.

Eligible projects will be scored by the Beautification Commission during their regular April 2025 meeting.

Projects will be given higher priority if they make substantial visible improvements, are high visibility projects, result in improvements to surrounding properties, utilize locally procured materials/labor/contractors, or fall into Tier One. Removal of exterior clutter, landscaping projects, public art and building facade improvements will also be given higher priority in the selection process. Plans for ongoing upkeep of the proposed improvements will also be considered by the commission.

The Beautification Commission will then forward the recommended list of grant awardees and grant amounts to the Valdez City Council for final funding approval at the next available regular Council meeting. Once grant projects are approved, City Clerk's Office staff will mail matching grant award letters which include a "Notice to Proceed" for the project. The Notice to Proceed document must be signed by the grant recipient and returned to the City Clerk's Office before construction on the grant project begins.

PROJECT EXECUTION:

Following approval, the applicant must secure all required federal, state, and municipal permits. **Projects that fail to obtain proper permitting shall forfeit their grant funding.**

If an applicant enters into an agreement with a contractor for the completion of specified eligible improvements, the applicant is solely responsible for the payment of services rendered on said project.

Awardees must complete the eligible improvements and submit the reimbursement packet by December 12, 2025, as outlined in the Notice to Proceed, unless otherwise extended in writing by the City of Valdez.

Extensions may only be granted one time, on a case-by-case basis, for exceptional circumstances. An extension may only be made for one additional grant cycle. **Extension requests must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office in writing prior to December 12, 2025, or will not be considered.** Extensions may be approved by City Clerk's Office staff if they meet criteria determined by the Beautification Commission. If the City Clerk's Office does not grant an extension, the applicant may appeal to the Beautification Commission.

In the event the grant reimbursement package is not submitted by the deadline and a time extension has not been granted, the City of Valdez reserves the right to terminate the grant award without any liability to the applicant, so that those funds may be dedicated elsewhere.

GRANT AMOUNTS:

Applicants can apply for a grant rebate to pay for up to 50 percent of the cost of improvements, with a maximum reimbursement of \$12,500 per building. Projects involving corner buildings or spanning more than one lot/parcel may request larger grant amounts, not to exceed a maximum reimbursement of \$25,000.

Please note: Depending on the number of applications and available funding for the grant program, awarded matching grants may be less than the full amount requested in the project application.

GRANT REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS:

Once the eligible improvements have been completed, the awardee shall notify the City through completion of a grant reimbursement request package. The applicant must submit documentation to the City as outlined in the reimbursement package below, including associated receipts and paid invoices for verification of eligible costs, copies of permits and inspection reports, the appropriate business W-9, and if a contractor was used, proof that the contract was paid. Applicants must also submit color before and after photographs when requesting grant reimbursement (preferably in electronic form).

After reviewing the accuracy of receipts and/or invoices for the eligible improvements, and upon verification that the eligible improvements have been completed in accordance with the grant award scope and project design drawings, plans, or specifications; the City will reimburse the applicant the matching grant amount within 30 days. **Only those improvements outlined in the grant award letter will be eligible for reimbursement.**



Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program 2025 Application

1. PROJECT LOCATION

Address to be improved: _____

Assessor Parcel ID Number(s): _____

Name of Business or Organization: _____

Is this property (check one): _____ Tier One _____ Tier Two

2. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Do you: _____ Own _____ Rent (month to month) _____ Lease

If leased, date of lease expiration: _____

Name of Property Owner(s): _____

Property Owner Email Address: _____

Property Owner Phone: _____

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Please attach the following to this application for consideration:

- Detailed written description of proposed work.
- Sketches or drawings of proposed improvements, including samples/photographs of paint colors or materials to be used (do not need to be professionally drawn, but are required for application consideration).
- Color “before” photographs of the area or areas to be improved (submitted electronically if possible).
- Bids for contracted work.
- Budget breakdown – including itemized list of costs associated with the project.
- A letter/narrative addressed to the Beautification Commission detailing how the proposed work adds to the aesthetics of your property and our community.

Applications missing any of the above items will not be considered.

4. ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR PROJECT COMPLETION:

5. ESTIMATED COSTS

TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: \$ _____

TOTAL MATCHING GRANT REQUESTED: \$ _____

Depending on available funding for the grant program, awarded matching grants may be less than the full amount requested in this project application. Could and would you proceed with this project if you are awarded less than the full matching grant amount requested?

Circle one: YES NO

Please explain. _____

By signing below, I confirm I have read and understand the requirements and process for the 2025 Beautification Matching Grant Program. The information submitted in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Property Owner Signature: _____ Date: _____

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____



Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program

City of Valdez
Beautification Commission
Attn: City Clerk's Office
PO BOX 307
Valdez, AK 99686

PROPERTY
OWNER PO Box
XXX
Valdez, AK 99686

Dear _____,

Congratulations! The Valdez Beautification Commission selected XXXXXXXX as a recipient of a 2025 Valdez Beautification Matching Grant.

Based upon your application, program guidelines and available grant funding, the Valdez City Council approved your award as follows:

XXXXXXXX Aesthetic Improvements (As outlined in application) \$XXXX

Total Award: \$XXXX

Only approved work, based upon your original application and up to the funding level and scope above, will be reimbursed. Any changes to the project after grant approval must be authorized by the Beautification Commission before work commences or the grant will be forfeited.

All grant eligible improvements must be completed, and your grant reimbursement package submitted by December 12, 2025. Time extensions may only be granted on a case-by-case basis and for exceptional circumstances. **Requests for time extension must be made in writing and submitted prior to the grant reimbursement deadline.** In the event the improvements are not completed by the deadline, the City of Valdez reserves the right to terminate the grant award without liability to you, so that those funds may be dedicated elsewhere.

Please note, if you enter into an agreement with a contractor for the completion of specified eligible improvements, then you are solely responsible for the payment of services rendered on said project. Additionally, failure to obtain proper municipal, state, and federal permits for your project will result in ineligibility for grant funding reimbursement.

Grant funding is only awarded after all project work is complete and the required grant documentation submitted to the City.

Please carefully read and follow the steps outlined below to ensure grant reimbursement:

- 1. Sign and return the attached 'Notice to Proceed' before beginning any work.**
2. Apply and secure all permits required by the City of Valdez, State of Alaska, or other regulatory bodies.
3. Save all original receipts associated with grant-eligible project related work, including materials purchased, payment to third party vendors, contractors, architectural or engineering services, and paid fees and permits.
4. Schedule and receive any building or other inspections required by the City of Valdez, State of Alaska, or other regulatory bodies.
5. Take color "after" photographs of the area(s) improved as part of the grant award once project work is complete.
6. Submit the following to the City in one documentation package for review:
 - Completed Beautification Matching Grant Reimbursement Form.
 - A copy of this letter.
 - Copy of your completed Notice to Proceed.
 - Color "before" and "after" photographs (submitted electronically if possible).
 - Copies of all permits and inspection reports associated with the project.
 - Document itemizing all expenses related to the project.
 - Originals of all receipts associated with the project (all invoices must indicate they have been paid prior to submission).
 - Proof of contractor payment (if applicable).
 - Copy of your business' IRS W-9.

City of Valdez
Beautification Matching Grant Program
Attn: City Clerk's Office
PO Box 307
Valdez, AK 99686

Email: COVBoards@valdezak.gov

After reviewing the accuracy of receipts and/or invoices for the eligible improvements, and upon verification that the eligible improvements have been completed in accordance with the design drawings, plans, specifications, or grant application; the City will reimburse you up to the grant award amount outlined in this letter. Reimbursement will be provided within 30 days.

Sincerely,

Magdalena McCay
Beautification Commission
Chair



Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program NOTICE TO PROCEED

Date: _____

Project: Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program

To: XXXXXXXXXX

In accordance with the Agreement dated _____, you are to complete the
WORK not later than December 12, 2025.

Summary of WORK:

- XXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXX

Total estimated project costs are \$XXXXXX. A maximum reimbursement of \$XXXXX has been
approved.

By: _____

Date: _____

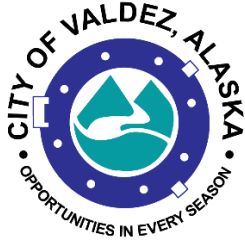
ACCEPTANCE OF NOTICE

Receipt of above NOTICE to proceed is hereby acknowledged by _____

_____ this, the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Title: _____



Valdez Beautification Matching Grant Program **REIMBURSEMENT FORM**

Name of Grantee: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Item(s) to be Reimbursed (Attached itemized list which must match submitted receipts):

Total Project Costs: \$ _____

Total to be Reimbursed: \$ _____

Submit the following to the City Clerk's Office with this form and before the established deadline to be eligible for 50/50 grant reimbursement:

- Completed Beautification Matching Grant Reimbursement Form.
- A copy of this letter.
- Copy of your completed Notice to Proceed.
- Color "before" and "after" photographs (submitted electronically if possible).
- Copies of all permits and inspection reports associated with the project.
- Document itemizing all expenses related to the project (typed or handwritten).
- Originals of all receipts associated with the project (all invoices must indicate they have been paid prior to submission).
- Proof of contractor payment (if applicable).
- Copy of your business' IRS W-9.

I declare under the penalty of perjury that the information I have provided herein is true and correct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Title: _____