



CITY OF WHITTIER

Gateway to Western Prince William Sound

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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Shen and Council
Through: Jackie C. Wilde, City Manager
From: Shelby Carlson, Assistant City Manager
Date: February 24, 2026
Subject: Proposal for Whittier Community Beautification Matching Grant Program

**REVISED – LAYDOWN
03/17/2026 Whittier City
Council Meeting**

1. Purpose and Policy Rationale

The proposed Whittier Community Beautification Matching Grant Program is designed to encourage visible, permanent exterior improvements to commercial properties within the City of Whittier.

The program's intent is to:

- Improve the overall visual character of Whittier's commercial corridors
- Reduce visible blight and exterior clutter
- Encourage reinvestment by property owners and business operators
- Support projects that reflect pride of place and long-term stewardship

Whittier's commercial areas include visible accumulations of derelict equipment, damaged vehicles, exterior storage, and deteriorated facades. While enforcement tools exist, this program would provide a voluntary, incentive-based approach to encourage improvement.

This is proposed as a one-year pilot program. **Funding for this effort to come from General Fund reserves account no. 01-000-3000 to Contracted Services account 01-700-6565.**

2. Funding Structure

- Total Program Budget: \$25,000
- Reimbursement Model: 50% matching grant
- Maximum Award Per Project: \$5,000
- Minimum Project Size: \$1,000 total project cost

This structure allows for:

- 3–15 meaningful projects depending on award size
- Broad participation without exhausting funds on one project

Funds would be reimbursed after project completion and submission of required documentation.

3. Eligible Properties

Eligible applicants must:

- Be commercial, small boat harbor, or mixed-use properties located within City limits
- Be current on property taxes (if applicable)
- Be current on lease payments (if leasing City property)
- Have no active code enforcement violations
- Obtain all required permits before construction

Residential-only properties would not be eligible.

4. Eligible Improvements

Projects must result in visible, permanent exterior improvements.

Examples include:

- Removal of derelict boats, engines, scrap metal, or exterior clutter
- Permanent landscaping or site improvements
- Façade upgrades (siding, repainting, exterior repairs)
- Permanent signage upgrades
- Screening of storage areas
- Removal of damaged vehicles or debris

Improvements must be exterior and visible from public rights-of-way.

5. Ineligible Improvements

- Routine maintenance
- Temporary or seasonal decorations
- Interior improvements
- Roof replacement
- New building construction
- Repairs covered by insurance claims
- Applicant labor
- Projects commenced prior to Council approval

6. Review and Approval Structure

It is proposed that Council establish a three-member Council Beautification Review Committee.

Committee Role:

- Review and score completed applications
- Recommend award amounts to full Council
- Forward recommendations for final approval by Council resolution

Staff Role:

- Confirm eligibility requirements
- Prepare scoring summaries
- Draft award resolution
- Process reimbursements

Final awards would be approved by full Council via resolution.

7. Application and Review Process

Proposed Timeline (Pilot Year):

- Application Period Opens: April 22
- Application Deadline: May 8
- Committee Review: May 11 – May 14
- Council Award Approval: May 19
- Project Completion Deadline: November 15
- Reimbursement Deadline: December 1

Applications must include:

- Detailed project description
- Before photos
- Cost estimates or bids
- Timeline
- Narrative explaining public visibility and impact

8. Scoring Criteria (Draft)

Projects may be prioritized based on:

- Visibility from public areas
- Reduction of visible blight or clutter
- Long-term durability of improvement
- Leveraging private investment
- Contribution to surrounding property values
- Compliance history of applicant

Scoring rubric to be developed for Council Committee review.

9. Evaluation

At the end of the pilot year, staff would present to Council:

- Number of applications received
- Projects funded
- Total funds reimbursed
- Before/after photo summary
- Recommendation whether to continue, modify, or sunset program

9. Evaluation

Administration requests Council's feedback. Please submit your comments and questions to cityclerk@whittieralaska.gov by Tuesday, March 24, 2026.