



To: Members of the Community Development Committee
From: Dana L. McDaniel, City Manager
Date: May 18, 2021
Initiated By: Jennifer M. Rauch, AICP, Director of Planning
Tammy Noble, Senior Planner
Re: Historic District Task Force Recommendations Implementation

Background

The Community Development Committee met on April 27, 2021 to discuss the Historic District Task Force recommendations and next steps for implementation of the recommendations. The Committee reviewed research provided by staff that outlined resources the City invests exclusively in the Historic District to foster economic vitality and strengthen our downtown core.

The second portion of the discussion was facilitated by Mr. Russ Balthis, a representative from Squire, Patton, and Boggs, who provided an overview of several economic development tools and strategies that could assist with furthering the recommendations of the Historic District Task Force. This included TIFs, Downtown Redevelopment Districts (DRD), Ohio Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA), Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA), Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits (OHPTC), Special Improvement Districts (SID), Façade Enhancement Program (FEP), Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas (DORA), Ohio Historical Connection (OHC), and public private partnerships through the creation of a non-profit organization. The City is already utilizing a CRA and DORA in the Historic District.

The Committee discussed the various options and requested that staff provide additional information on façade enhancement programs, establishing a public private partnership with the creation of a nonprofit entity or committee, and establishing a SID.

Economic Development Tools and Strategies

Façade Enhancement Program

Dublin's Previous Commercial Façade Improvement Program (2018)

The City of Dublin implemented the Commercial Façade Improvement Program in 2018 to encourage private investment in property renovations and overall building improvements that enhance the quality and character of Historic Dublin. The program shared the costs of improving commercial building exteriors and publicly used amenities that improve the vibrancy of the Historic core. The City of Dublin provided matching grants to property owners or tenants who would otherwise not be able to make these improvements without financial assistance. An overview of the previous program structure is as follows:

Grant Amount: Up to 50% of the eligible project cost. \$15,000 maximum grant per project

Grant Requirements:

- Zoning and building permit review and approval.
- Properties must be located within Historic Dublin.
- Commercial, mixed-use (not strictly residential), non-profit, and not-for-profit (holding valid 501(C) status with the IRS).
- Compliance with all provisions of the Dublin Zoning Code and Historic Dublin Design Guidelines.

Eligibility:

Tenant and property owners of commercial and mixed-use structures within the boundaries of Historic Dublin are eligible for funding. Sample Eligible Projects included:

- Uncovering and restoration of historical facades
- Replacement/repair of cornice, parapets and shutters
- Awning/sign installation or replacement
- Site and landscape improvements in areas that are accessible to the public
- Parking improvements and expansion
- Storefront restoration or renovation
- Window and door repair or replacement
- Roof replacement (must include additional façade improvements)

The program did not include new construction or routine repairs or maintenance unless the repairs impacted the structural integrity of the building. The project also required a registered architect or design professional with expertise in historic structures, and only permits design fees up to ten percent of the total project cost. Priority was given to projects that resulted in a comprehensive restoration or improvement to an entire building or façade to maximize the impacts the program would have in the Historic District.

The Commercial Façade Improvement Program completed several projects that improved the appearance of the Historic District and demonstrated the benefit of such a program. Examples of approved and constructed projects are as follows:

133 South High Street (Rear Façade)



53 North High Street (Side Walk)



The Commercial Façade Improvement Program was suspended in 2020 based on the recommendation of Squire, Patton and Boggs who was concerned the program structure was not operated through another entity such as a Community Improvement Corporation (“CIC”) or was not directly correlated to job retention. The options of partnering with an entity such as the CIC and/or tying the program to job retention better ensures that the program fulfills a public purpose and improves the economic welfare of the community.

Similar Façade Programs in Other Jurisdictions

The following communities have similar façade enhancement programs that show the range of options that may be considered should the City of Dublin desire to reinstate such a program moving forward. Staff has provided a summary of each of these programs, listed below, including a series of discussion questions for consideration of the CDC.

The City of Delaware

The City of Delaware’s Downtown Façade Program promotes the improvement of all commercial properties within the historic district. The program allows for various improvement projects such as exterior facade improvements, lighting, siding, painting, fascia, awnings, windows, fire escapes, brick replacement/tuck pointing/stucco and masonry work, parapets and roofing, doors, other visible exterior building components.

Delaware’s program is limited to a specific geographical area, does not provide funding resources for residential or institutional uses and is exclusive to exterior improvements. The program also does not provide funds for interior improvements, operating funds, salaries, activities related to specific downtown promotional events, architectural design assistance, refinancing of existing debt, inventory costs, permit fees, legal fees, plumbing repair or improvements, HVAC repair or improvements, parking lot resurfacing, or sidewalk improvements.

The City of Tiffin

The City of Tiffin operates the Tiffin Façade Enhancement Program that focuses primarily on the “street view” of the City and allows matching funds up to \$10,000 for exterior modification to

any street-facing buildings. The Program does not specify limitations to uses of buildings and permits residential, commercial, retail, industrial or institutional buildings. The funds permit improvements to awnings, masonry work, painting, repair or replacement of doors or windows, repair or replacement of roofing systems, and other visible improvements. Interior work, HVAC or plumbing maintenance, sidewalk repairs, or landscaping updates are not eligible. This program is geographically specific, has matching funds and a maximum grant amount.

The City of Worthington

The City of Worthington's program is the Façade Assistance and Corridor Enhancement (FACE) Program which replaced their previous façade program called the ReCAP Program. The previous program focused solely on the City's industrial corridor, whereas the FACE program is available to all commercial properties in Worthington, excluding retail and residential. The program provides a mixture of grant funds and no-cost financing to building owners or commercial tenants to improve their building facades and surrounding streetscapes. While the ReCAP program proved to be successful, funding 17 projects between 2014 and 2018, the City saw the need to expand the geographic boundaries of the program and make it available to all of Worthington. The maximum grant is fifty percent of the lowest contractor's bid for work under the project or \$25,000, whichever is less. Each project has a maximum one time grant payment of \$12,500 and a maximum \$12,500 loan at zero percent (0%) interest for a term of up to three (3) years. The current façade program has been operating since 2019 and is available for properties throughout Worthington.

Process for Reinstating a Façade Program

Should City Council choose to reinstate a façade enhancement program in Dublin, Squire, Patton and Boggs recommends working with another entity, such as the CIC to develop and operating the program. The CIC was created in connection with a 2015 non-tax revenue bond issue and the powers of the CIC were limited for that purpose. The CIC's bylaws and organizational documents would need to be reviewed and possibly amended to ensure a façade enhancement program would be a proper use of the CIC's authority. The City would also need to appropriate the funds necessary to operate the façade improvement program to the CIC.

An alternative to partnering with the CIC on a façade improvement program that was suggested by Squire, Patton and Boggs, is to add a job creation and/or retention requirement to the grant. Staff does not recommend tying job creation and/or retention to a façade improvement program as it would not be consistent with our economic development strategies and oftentimes it is the building owner, and not the business or tenant, making the building improvements.

Staff recommends the following discussion topics for the CDC's further consideration:

1. Should Dublin develop and operate a façade enhancement program?
2. Should the façade enhancement program be limited to commercial development or expanded to include residential development?
3. Should the program be limited to the Historic District or should it be throughout the City?
4. Should the façade enhancement program be limited to building improvements or should

routine maintenance also be permitted?

5. What other funding mechanism should be considered to supplement the City's programs?
6. Other considerations?

Public Private Partnerships Through the Creation of a Non-Profit Entity

At the meeting on April 27, 2021, the Community Development Committee expressed an interest in establishing a non-profit organization. The non-profit organization would establish a Board of Directors to manage the organization and board members could be appointed to represent various groups associated with the Historic District. Funding for this type of partnership varies but usually incorporates contributions from the local governmental entity, business contributions, and other potential funding sources such as fundraising events and grants. The Committee discussed several examples of public private partnerships and agreed that they would like more discussion of how an entity could be created.

To create a successful public private partnership significant collaboration between the City and the business community is required. The first step to create a partnership could include organizing a steering committee to build on the work of the Historic District Task Force to establish priorities regarding which public improvements or services should be prioritized and the financial considerations that are required for the services including fundraising opportunities and other revenue generation. In terms of funding, the most common sources are the local business community, the City, and fundraising activities or events to support the organization. The goal of the steering committee would be to facilitate these discussions and target potential fundraising opportunities and realistic expectations for financial support from local businesses.

Once there is consensus regarding which public improvements should be pursued, a budget would be established including costs associated with the proposed services and a schedule for implementing the services. It would also include a strategy for fundraising and the creation of a non-profit organization to oversee the distribution of the funds. Mr. Balthis will share several examples of this model during the May 25, 2021 CDC meeting.

Special Improvement District

A SID is a geographically defined area of the City where property owners petition the City to levy an additional assessment from the property owners in the area so that additional amenities or services can be provided within the district. This is a strategy that is initiated by the property owners in order to have amenities that typically would not be provided by typical governmental services. It also allows a mutual commitment between the local governmental entity and the commercial business owners to reinvest in their community. SIDs are also commonly referred to as Business Improvement Areas, Business Revitalization Zones, and Special Services Areas. The Community Development Committee was interested in this incentive option if a service request for the Historic District could not be provided by other avenues. The City could work with Historic District stakeholders to petition the City to create a SID. Mr. Balthis from Squire, Patton and Boggs has provided information for next steps the City could consider for implementing a SID.

The first step to create a SID would be to organize a steering committee that can gather

property owners, the business community and other stakeholders who will benefit from a SID. The steering committee would include members from all of these various groups and could also include members of the Historic District Task Force.

The main task of the steering committee would be to educate the property owners within the proposed SID regarding the costs and benefits of SIDs and the different methods of structuring the special assessments. In addition to providing information on how SIDs function, the steering committee can discuss what type of public improvements or services they would want the SID to provide which could include the addition of gas street lamps, improvements to the Historic District gateways, and community event planning or marketing services for the Historic District. An important part of the discussion may also include what resources, if any, are available from the City to fund the improvements.

Once the steering committee determines that there is 60 percent participation amongst the property owners with frontage along all public roads in the SID or 75% of land area, the steering committee would begin working on a plan laying out all of the public improvements and services, along with a budget and schedule. Once the plan and budget are developed, the property owners may petition the City to move forward with the SID and related special assessments. City Council would then need to approve the petition and assess the special assessments.

In terms of financial obligations or restrictions that apply to governmental entities involved in a SID, no minimum contributions or maximum contributions are required. Furthermore, funding can vary from one SID to another depending on the prioritization of the project or projects identified by the SID. In Ohio, a SID is required to hold a public meeting and an election every year. Additionally a written report must be provided to property owners within the participating geographical area. SIDs automatically terminate after ten years and if property owners would like to continue the SID, the original process is required. Currently there are 1000 SID's in the United States, with 23 in Ohio. Of those 23 SID's in Ohio, only 2 have not been reauthorized indicating the success of these partnerships within the Ohio region. Mr. Balthis will share several examples of SIDs during the May 25, 2021 CDC meeting.

Recommendation

This information is provided for the Community Development Committee's consideration in preparation for the May 25, 2021 meeting. Mr. Balthis will deliver a presentation about façade enhancement programs, public private partnerships through the creation of a non-profit entity, and SIDs and participate in the discussion. Staff respectfully requests the Committee provide recommendations for next steps in implementing these objectives to further the goals of the Historic District Task Force.

EXPENDITURES HISTORIC DISTRICT

TABLE 1-CAPITAL EXPENDITURES (2021 AND PRIOR)

Capital Expenditures 2021 and prior	
Item	Total Cost
Pedestrian Bridge (spent to date)	\$ 24,016,266.00
West Plaza (incl. \$510K for stone facing addition 2021)	\$ 2,229,428.44
CML Garage, street network, Grounds of Remembrance	\$ 17,904,006.00
S. High Street Streetscape Enhancements (2021 construction)	\$ 1,000,000.00
Overhead Utility Removal (Southern HD, Phase 1 – 2021 construction)	\$ 1,385,000.00
Riverside Crossing Park, West Path Development	\$ 172,500.00
N. Riverview Street Land Acquisition	\$ 1,950,000.00
Total	\$ 48,657,200.44

TABLE 2-REOCCURRING EXPENDITURES

Reoccurring Expenditures	
Item	Current Cost per Year
Parking Lease with Church	\$ 12,000.00
Bed Tax Grants	\$ 50,000.00
Façade Improvement Program (2019)	\$ 100,000.00
Bridge and High Street TIF (Tax Increment Financing)	\$ 113,000.00

Historic District Parking TIF	\$ 73,600.00
35% Hotel/Motel Tax Fund to Visit Dublin	\$ 960,000.00
Solid Waste Services-High Street	\$ 9,450.00
Brick Sidewalk Maintenance	\$ 60,000.00
Cost Recovery Subsidies (for Minor Project/Master Sign applications-per app)	\$ 940.00
Total	\$ 1,378,050.00

TABLE 3-FUTURE CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

Future Capital Expenditures		
Item	Year	Expenditure
Franklin Street Improvements and AEP; S. High Street Pole Line Removal	2022	\$ 600,000.00
Overhead Utility Removal – Southern Historic Dublin, Phase 2	2022	\$ 985,000.00
Franklin Street Extension	2022	\$ 3,055,000.00
Total		\$ 4,640,000.00

TABLE 4-EXPENDITURES (SEASONAL DÉCOR)

Seasonal Décor				
Item	Base Cost	Base Year	Frequency (Years)	Current Cost per Year (2021, add 3% per year)
Wreaths				
Purchase Wreaths	\$ 64,700.00	2014	10	\$ 8,000.00
Install Wreaths (Elec Crew)	\$ 2,462.40	2020	1	\$ 2,550.00
Remove Wreaths (Elec Crew)	\$ 2,462.40	2020	1	\$ 2,550.00
Install/Remove Wreaths (Streets)	\$ 5,322.00	2020	1	\$ 5,322.00
Purchase Bulbs	\$ 900.00	2014	1	\$ 1,100.00
Purchase Replacement Bows	\$ 11,250.00	2014	3	\$ 4,620.00
Snowflakes				
Purchase Snowflakes	\$ 9,117.00	2009	5	\$ 1,900.00
Install Snowflakes	\$ 607.00	2009	1	\$ 865.00
Remove Snowflakes	\$ 469.00	2011	1	\$ 670.00
Purchase Bulbs	\$ 100.00	2020	1	\$ 110.00
Christmas Tree and Seasonal Planters				
Purchase Tree	\$ 950.00	2020	1	\$ 950.00
Décor Christmas Planters	\$ 15,500.00	2020	1	\$ 15,500.00
Planters for 3 Remaining Seasons	\$ 10,900.00	2020	1	\$ 10,900.00
Total				\$ 55,037.00

Item	Base Cost	Base Year	Frequency (Years)	Current Cost per Year (2021, add 3% per year)
Install Flags	\$ 1,092.00	2020	1	\$ 1,125.00
Remove Flags	\$ 1,092.00	2020	1	\$ 1,125.00
Purchase Replacement Brackets	\$ 6,342.00	2020	5	\$ 1,500.00
Purchase Flags/Brackets	\$ 4,950.00	2018	3	\$ 1,200.00
Total				\$ 4,950.00



City of Dublin

Commercial Façade Improvement Program 2019

Overview

The Commercial Façade Improvement Program is designed to encourage private investment in property renovations and overall building improvements that enhance the quality and character of Historic Dublin. The program will share the costs of improving commercial building exteriors and publicly used amenities that improve the vibrancy of the Historic Core. The City of Dublin will provide matching grants to property owners or tenants who would otherwise not be able to make these improvements without financial assistance.

Eligibility

Commercial, mixed-use, non-profit and non-for-profit organization (holding valid 501(C) status with the IRS) properties within the boundaries of Historic Dublin (see page 6 map). Government operating buildings are not eligible.

Grant Amount

- Up to 50% of the total eligible project costs, not to exceed \$15,000.
- Projects must have a minimum of \$5,000 (\$10,000 total project cost).
- Grantees will be reimbursed at the conclusion of the project after certification of costs and verification of compliance with approved plans.

Application Requirement

- Property owners or tenants are eligible to apply.
- Tenants must have written approval by property owner.
- Property owner/tenants must be current on all municipal taxes, utility bills, City Codes and property maintenance or projects that bring their property maintenance into compliance.



ELIGIBLE PROJECTS & CRITERIA

Eligible Projects

Criteria

- Routine repairs or maintenance are NOT eligible unless the repairs represent major improvements that contribute to structural longevity.
- Projects must comply with application Zoning Code requirements and the Historic Dublin Design Guidelines.
- Projects must gain all necessary zoning and building permit approvals prior to proceeding with work.
- Use of a qualified architect or design with expertise in historic structures encouraged.
- Design fees not to exceed 10% of total project costs unless granted (% charged by architect or Construction Company for project).
- Priority given to projects that result in comprehensive restoration or improvement to the entire building or façade.

General Improvements List

- Uncovering and restoration of historical facades.
- Replacement/repair of cornice, parapets, shutters and other architectural features.
- Removal of inappropriate façade materials.
- Addition of appropriate detailing which leads to a substantially enhanced appearance.
- Site and landscape improvements in areas that are open and accessible to the public.
- Window repair or replacement – if returned to original historical character.
- Door repair or replacement – if returned to original historical character.
- Tuck pointing
- Exterior painting
- Awning installation or replacement
- Installation and improvement of signs
- Installation of decorative lighting and upgrading of existing fixtures on external facades
- Storefront restoration or renovation
- Parking improvements (striping, paving, signage, etc.), new parking additions and shared parking arrangements
- Projects that increase accessibility
- Projects that promote sustainability that is historically sensitive
- Roof replacement must include additional façade improvements

Ineligible Projects

- Cost of new construction or routine maintenance
- Projects that commence before City of Dublin approval of grant
- Projects that commence prior to gaining required zoning and building permit approval

Decision Criteria

General

- Amount requested will be compared with available funds.
- Projects will be required against the criteria outlined below.
- Projects with the highest rankings will receive priority in the awarding of grant monies.
- Grant monies may be reduced if projects or portions of projects are deemed ineligible or requested funding amount is not available.
- Priority will be given to projects that result in comprehensive restoration, are highly visibility, and impact the public street.

The following criteria will be taken into account:

- Instances where an immediate renovation would stop serious deterioration of the building's façade and where historic or architecturally significant feature contributing to the building's character are in danger of being lost
- Projects that would restore the historic features of a building
- Projects that would improve the architectural integrity of a building
- Projects that demonstrate the ability to attract people to Historic Dublin
- Projects that would result in significant new investment and the creation of jobs in Historic Dublin
- Projects involving buildings with vacant or underutilized spaces where the overall marketability of the building would be improved
- Project that incorporate a mixed of uses or multiple tenants
- Applications that demonstrate the applicant's capacity to complete a project

Grant requirements

- Owner/tenant shall comply with all provisions of the Dublin Codified Ordinances and Ohio Building Code.
- Applicants must gain all zoning and building permits approvals prior to project commencement.
- Projects must be completed within 180 days of grant approval, or receive permission from the City for additional time.
- All projects will be inspected by the City for interior and exterior compliance.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step One: Pre-application Meeting

Applicants are required to schedule a pre-application meeting with staff to review the scope of work and drawings. To request a preliminary meeting, please contact:

Commercial Façade Improvement Program

5800 Shier Rings Road

Dublin, Ohio 43017

(614) 410-4429

FacadeImprovement@Dublin.oh.us

Step Two: Façade Improvement Application Submittal

Applications will be accepted on an on-going basis. Applicants shall be required to submit:

- Completed Commercial Façade Improvement Program Application.
- Estimated budget with detailed line items (including a contingency of up to 10% for each line item) and financing options.
- Pictures, site plans, architectural rendering and/or other visual representations of the proposed improvements.

Step Three: Project Approval Process

- Applications will be reviewed and accepted based on the complete submission and eligibility requirements outlined above. Applicants will be notified of incomplete and ineligible applications.
- Upon acceptance, applications will be reviewed and ranked based on the Decision Criteria listed above.
- Decision letters awarding funding will be sent to all applicants within 21 days of application submission.
- Applications will submit and gain any necessary zoning and building permit approvals prior to project commencement.
- Projects are expected to begin within 60 days of zoning and building permit approval and completed within 180 days.

Step Four: Project Completion & Grant Reimbursement

City Staff will conduct a review of projects upon completion for compliance with zoning and building permit approval. For a project to be considered complete and eligible for reimbursement, applicant must:

- Obtain all applicable building permits and pass all building inspections relating to the projects.
- Submit a completed W-9.
- Submit third-party receipts or invoices to the City of Dublin that match the project description and final budget. If other building improvements were made in conjunction with the façade improvements, separate cost summaries related to the façade improvements must be provided. In-kind contributions are not eligible unless prior written approval is provided to the City of Dublin.
- Receive City of Dublin verification of work.

Historic Dublin Location Map



**Historic Dublin,
Ohio - Location Map**

Historic Dublin
properties fall with
the light green
overlay.

Commercial Façade Improvement Program 2019



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Commercial Façade Improvement Program is designed to encourage high-quality building improvements that contribute to the character and vibrancy of the Historic Dublin core. The City of Dublin will provide matching grants to property owners or tenants of commercial buildings to encourage these renovations and restoration efforts.

Grant Amount

- Up to 50% of the eligible project cost
- \$15,000 maximum grant per project

Grant Requirements

- Zoning and building permit review and approval.
- Properties must be located within Historic Dublin (see map in *Guidelines Document*).
- Commercial, mixed-use (not strictly residential), non-profit, and not-for-profit (holding valid 501(C) status with the IRS).
- Compliance with all provisions of the Dublin Zoning Code and Historic Dublin Design Guidelines.

ELIGIBILITY

Tenant and property owners of commercial and mixed-use structures within the boundaries of Historic Dublin are eligible for funding. Refer to the Commercial Façade Improvement Program Guidelines for a detailed list of eligible activities and program requirements (see website information below).

Sample Eligible Projects

- Uncovering and restoration of historical facades
- Replacement/repair of cornice, parapets and shutters
- Awning/sign installation or replacement
- Site and landscape improvements in areas that are accessible to the public
- Parking improvements and expansion
- Storefront restoration or renovation
- Window and door repair or replacement
- Installation of decorative lighting & upgrading of existing external fixtures
- Roof replacement (must include additional façade improvements)

CONTACT US

For more information visit:

www.econdev.dublinohiousa.gov/facade-improvement-program/

Or Contact: **Façade Improvement Program**
5800 Shier Rings Road
Dublin, Ohio 43017
(614) 410-4429
FaçadeImprovement@Dublin.oh.us

Application Process

1. Pre-application Meeting
 2. Application Submission
 3. Application Review
 4. Required Zoning and Building Permit Approvals
 5. Complete Project
 6. Project Reimbursement
- 