

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:      **CAMPUSTOWN FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM****

**BACKGROUND:**

The Campustown Façade Program is being developed to enhance the appearance of Campustown commercial buildings. Council accepted the approach of finalizing a Façade Program based upon the Idea Book and pilot projects. Each year project applications will be reviewed for grant funding based on the following Idea Book design concepts:

Transparent Campustown. Visual transparency invites pedestrians to patronize the businesses inside. Physical access promotes cohesiveness within the district. Promoting more glass and larger physical openings show the commercial offerings in the district and encourage people to spend more time there.

Social Campustown. Well-designed outdoor gathering areas create a positive social atmosphere. Small, unused, visible spaces can be transformed to expand commercial opportunities. It is not the intent of the program to fund sidewalk dining or other uses of the public right-of-way, although improvements to the building that are part of any outdoor gathering area project would be eligible.

Diverse Campustown. The variety of building types and design styles contribute to the vibrancy, funkiness, visual interest, and diversity of businesses. Façades are encouraged to be distinct from their neighbors and unique in the district.

Identifiable Campustown. High quality signs, graphics, and other design features that express the unique identity of local businesses can be part of a distinctive design for façade improvements.

Historic Campustown. Some buildings in Campustown have potential to illustrate the historic development of Campustown over 100 years. Projects can include removing cover-up materials, restoring original storefronts/entrances, and restoring masonry.

**At the November 24, 2015, Council meeting, staff reviewed some of the eligibility requirements with the Council to get direction on a few of the program details regarding the total grant funding available per project, the number of grants per grant application cycle, and the allowance for a grant request for a second commercial façade or a second floor residential**

**façade. Council directed staff to get input from Campustown Action Association regarding its desires for the program.**

**The CAA Board met and has provided a written letter that is attached. In general, the CAA Board was supportive of awarding up to two grants to one property in a grant cycle, when it is a corner property or where there are multiple individual tenant storefronts. However, it did not believe that longer facades alone warranted additional grants. CAA also noted its support of grant funds being used for second floor façade areas for both commercial and residential facades as it provides and adds to the design character of the building and atmosphere of the Campustown area.**

Finalize Campustown Façade Program:

In summary, the Campustown Facade Program will include the following key components:

1. One grant cycle per year.
2. Each grant ward will be a \$1 to \$1 match for up to \$15,000.
3. Each project may be awarded up to two façade grants, totaling \$30,000. Each grant would be scored independently.
4. Additionally, allow for up to \$2,000 when a project includes a licensed design professional.
5. Projects will be scored based on visual impact, financial impact, and consistency with the Idea Book concepts.
6. A project must have a commercial use on the ground floor, but upper floors of building that include residential or commercial uses may be included in a grant request.
7. Facades must be street facing.
8. Eligible improvements for façade grants must be permanent improvements.
9. A facade project must further the goals of the design concepts and not substantially detract from other design concepts in the Idea Book. A facade improvement that replaces an already compliant façade is an ineligible request.
10. The Historic design concept is an optional approach to the facade design.
11. The Idea Book is an administrative guidance document to the program and the examples and references can be reviewed and updated by staff as necessary.

Staff has attached the administrative documents for the program for Council's acceptance of them meeting the intent and purpose of the Façade Program. Presuming Council is satisfied with the attached program documents, program eligibility requirements, and program guidelines as attached; the Campustown Grant Program can be approved. Staff will then initiate the application process for a new round of façade applications this winter. Council has budgeted \$50,000 in the FY15-16 budget for the Façade Program.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council can accept the described Campustown Façade Program, which includes the most recent feedback from the CAA, and direct staff to initiate the program starting in January 2016.
2. The City Council can direct staff to make modifications to the program and have staff initiate the program in January 2016.
3. The City Council can refer this item back to staff for revisions to the grant program documents or for further information.

**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The City Council has an established goal to support Campustown and an objective to create a Campustown Façade Program. The Idea Book incorporates design concepts tailored to the Campustown area. Staff believes that the proposed principles, the “Idea Book” approach, and the attached program eligibility documents reflect the characteristics of Campustown, will encourage the creativity that those characteristics call for, and can form the basis for a manageable façade grant program.

**Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, thereby accepting the described program and having staff initiate the program in January 2016.**

# Campustown Façade Grant

## Checklist

Please provide the following information with your application:

- Drawings or images** illustrating the design of proposed improvements, including:
  - Property address
  - Date of preparation
  - A minimum of one exterior elevation of the front facade and any other areas needed to convey the complete design proposed. (Clearly show dimensions and detail of all proposed architectural features. Enlargements of individual features are recommended.)
  - Labels identifying existing and proposed architectural features
  - Labels identifying existing and proposed types of materials
  - Overall dimensions of the front façade and dimensions of the individual components that are to be modified.
  - Location, type, materials, lighting, and dimensions of any proposed signs
  
- Written statement that includes the following:**
  - A description of the proposed project. Please describe how the proposed design incorporates any of the following design concepts, more fully described in the *Campustown Idea Book*:
    - Transparent Campustown
    - Social Campustown
    - Diverse Campustown
    - Identifiable Campustown
    - Historic Campustown
  
  - If the proposed project incorporates the design concept of Historic Campustown, give a brief description or any information relating to the history of the building and/or the historic design of the facades.
  
  - A description of the types of materials that exist on the front facades of the buildings.
  
- Structural integrity and constructability of the project:** Address what investigation has been done to review the structural integrity of the building and the constructability of the proposed improvement project. Please include information regarding any potential complications in design or construction of the proposed façade improvements. The following questions should be considered:
  - What structural modifications are necessary for your proposed project?
  - How does your proposed facade renovation handle water and ice related maintenance issues?
  - If your building is a historic building, what efforts are being taken to maintain or preserve the historic character of the building?

- Has a contractor or design professional (architect or engineer) analyzed your proposed facade modifications for constructability? Is your project build-able?
  - Has a contractor or design professional (architect or engineer) weighed-in on the feasibility of your proposed facade modifications? Does the scope of proposed work match the available funds?
- Written permission from the property owner** by signature on the application form for the specific improvements to be financed with the Campustown Façade Improvement Program, if the applicant is a tenant of the building and not the owner of the property.
- Project budget** that includes cost estimates prepared by an architect, engineer, or contractor, including any fees of a design professional.
- Additional images or information** as requested by the City.

# Campustown Façade Grant

## *Eligibility & Terms*

### 1. Eligibility Requirements

- Eligible participants include the owners and/or tenants of buildings located inside the boundaries of the project area for the *Campustown Façade Grant Program*, which contain Office Uses or Trade Uses as defined by the Ames zoning ordinance.
- Ineligible participants include the owners and/or tenants of residential structures and buildings owned by the government, churches and other religious institutions.
- Concurrence of the property owner is required, in writing, before improvements proposed by the tenant can be considered for approval.
- Improvements must be made to one or more of street facing facades of a building and the design of such improvements must comply with the current *Campustown Idea Book*.
- For Historic Facades, grant money will be provided for replacing existing compliant elements only when the proposed project also includes replacing non-compliant elements with compliant elements.
- Grant money will not be eligible for projects where existing facades are already compliant with the design concepts of the *Campustown Idea Book*. A proposal must have additive value of furthering the concepts of the Campustown Idea Book.
- Grants may be offered if all non-compliant elements of the entire façade or of all facades intended to be improved are not to be improved under one grant project. However, the improvements must contribute to a project that, when complete, will be generally consistent with all design standards. To determine this, an application must include elevation plans for all facades intended to be improved showing how they are intended to look when complete.
- For all projects for which all improvements will not be completed under the grant, the scope of proposed improvements for the grant shall be visually significant in the context of how the whole building is intended to look when all improvements to the façade are complete. The City may approve a grant based upon a proposed improvement's contribution to the finished product, and may deny a grant for improvements that, while compliant in part, are not visually significant in terms of how the overall building is intended to ultimately look when all improvements to the façade are complete.
- If a project is phased, a grant shall be offered only to those improvements that are done in correct sequence of construction. For example, a finished project may require installing or changing windows, in some cases siding is installed after windows are in place. In such cases the windows would need to be replaced before grant monies may be expended on siding materials.
- Proposed façade improvement must not substantially conflict with one of the design concepts. For example, creating identity cannot obscure transparency.

## 2. Terms of the Grant Agreement

- **Accounts and Records.** The grant recipient shall maintain books, records, documents, and other evidence pertaining to all costs and expenses incurred and revenues acquired under the grant to the extent and in such detail as will properly reflect all costs, direct and indirect, of labor, materials, equipment, supplies, services, and other costs and expenses of whatever nature for which payment is made with the proceeds of the grant. The grant recipient will retain these records for three years from the date City makes payment of the grant.
- **Administrative Costs.** No grant proceeds shall be used for administrative expenses.
- **Amendments.** These Program guidelines, terms and conditions may be amended from time to time by the Director of the Planning and Housing Department for reasons of operational efficiency or unforeseen circumstances that may arise or conflict with applicable City or State regulations affecting the administration of the Program.
- **Amount of the Grant.** The maximum amount of a single improvement grant will be \$15,000. (Exceptions may be approved by the City Council on a case-by-case basis; allowing for a maximum of \$30,000 in grant funding to be granted for either a project that includes improvements to a second street facing façade on a corner building, or a project that includes improvements to more than one tenant space within the same building.)
- **Cost Sufficiency.** The City does not make any warranty, either expressed or implied, that the proceeds of the grant available for payment of the costs of the project will be sufficient to pay any specific portion of the costs that will be incurred in that connection. The City is under no obligation to advance funds in addition to those specified in the grant approval by City Council.
- **Disbursement of Grant.** Grant funds shall be disbursed to the grant recipient only upon the satisfactory completion of the project in accordance with a design for the project that has been approved by the City. The amount of the payment to the grant recipient will be one-half of the total cost of the work approved for the grant as documented by the bills submitted by the grant recipient, but shall not exceed the total grant amount approved by the City Council.
- **Fees of a Design Professional.** When included in the grant application, the City shall make a grant of up to \$2,000 to reimburse the grant recipient for the documented fees of a design professional other than the grant recipient or family member of the grant recipient.
- **Inclusions and Omission.** The requirements and regulations for Program administration are designed to supplement and amplify the provisions as set forth in the applicable zoning and building code regulations administered by the City of Ames. These regulations, utilized together with the Idea Book and the eligibility and terms, provide the basis for program administration. The lack of any item to be included in the program shall not relieve or release the grant recipient(s), property owner(s), consultant(s), contractor(s) or City from the responsibilities under the provisions outlined in the applicable zoning and building codes and program terms and conditions.

- **Matching Funds.** The grant recipient's expenditures for the project from sources other than the proceeds of the grant shall equal the amount of the grant proceeds.
- **Notice of Award.** An approved recipient of grant funds must enter into a signed grant agreement with the City within a reasonable time after notice of award by the City. Failure to complete and sign a grant agreement may result in forfeiture of the grant award.
- **Tax Payer Identification Number.** After City Council awards grants, all grant recipients are required to provide to the City a copy of Internal Revenue Service Form W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification. The City will only issue a Notice to Proceed after it receives the W-9 Form.
- **Notice to Proceed.** After the City has approved all design elements, all required permits and received the W-9 form, the City will issue a Notice to Proceed. No work funded by the grant shall proceed until on or after the date of the Notice to Proceed. No reimbursement from grant funds will be made for work carried out before the date of the Notice to Proceed.
- **Statement of Work and Services.** The grant recipient will perform the work in a satisfactory and proper manner, as determined by the City conforming to the approved application, project budget, and project schedule.
- **Permits.** All pertinent permits must be obtained and all work must comply with City, State, and Federal regulations.
- **Report of the City Building Official.** The City Building Official shall determine if the work conforms to all applicable codes and regulations, and that any and all pre-existing code defects in the building façade have been corrected to conform to all appropriate codes.
- **Request for Payment.** The grant recipient shall submit to the City on a form provided by the City a listing of all bills for the materials and work completed and a statement that all work under the approved grant has been completed and that the listing is complete. The grant recipient shall also submit evidence as may be reasonably required to substantiate all payments that are requested, such as lien waivers or conditional lien waivers.
- **Time of Project Completion and Fund Request.** The work approved for the grant shall be completed within six months of the date of the "Notice to Proceed." The grant recipient shall request grant funds only after the project has been completed in accordance with the approved application. Staff may grant one additional 6 month extension.
- **Use of Grant Funds.** The grant funds shall not be spent on any other purpose(s) than the activities approved in the application.



## **Scoring Criteria for Campustown Façade Grants**

*To be used to evaluate competing grant applications and to advise City Council in awarding grants. **The purpose of the grant program is to promote investment that creates or expands use and interest within Campustown.** Higher scores will be given to projects that meet many of the Idea Book design concepts and create a significant visual or financial impact for the Campustown Area.*

### **IDEA BOOK DESIGN CONCEPTS**

**Maximum Score 40 Points**

The number of points granted in this category shall be based upon the strength of the proposed improvement project to be consistent with the Design Concepts as identified in the Campustown Idea Book. Projects identifying compliance with more of the design concepts deserve more points.

### **VISUAL IMPACT**

**Maximum Score 30 Points**

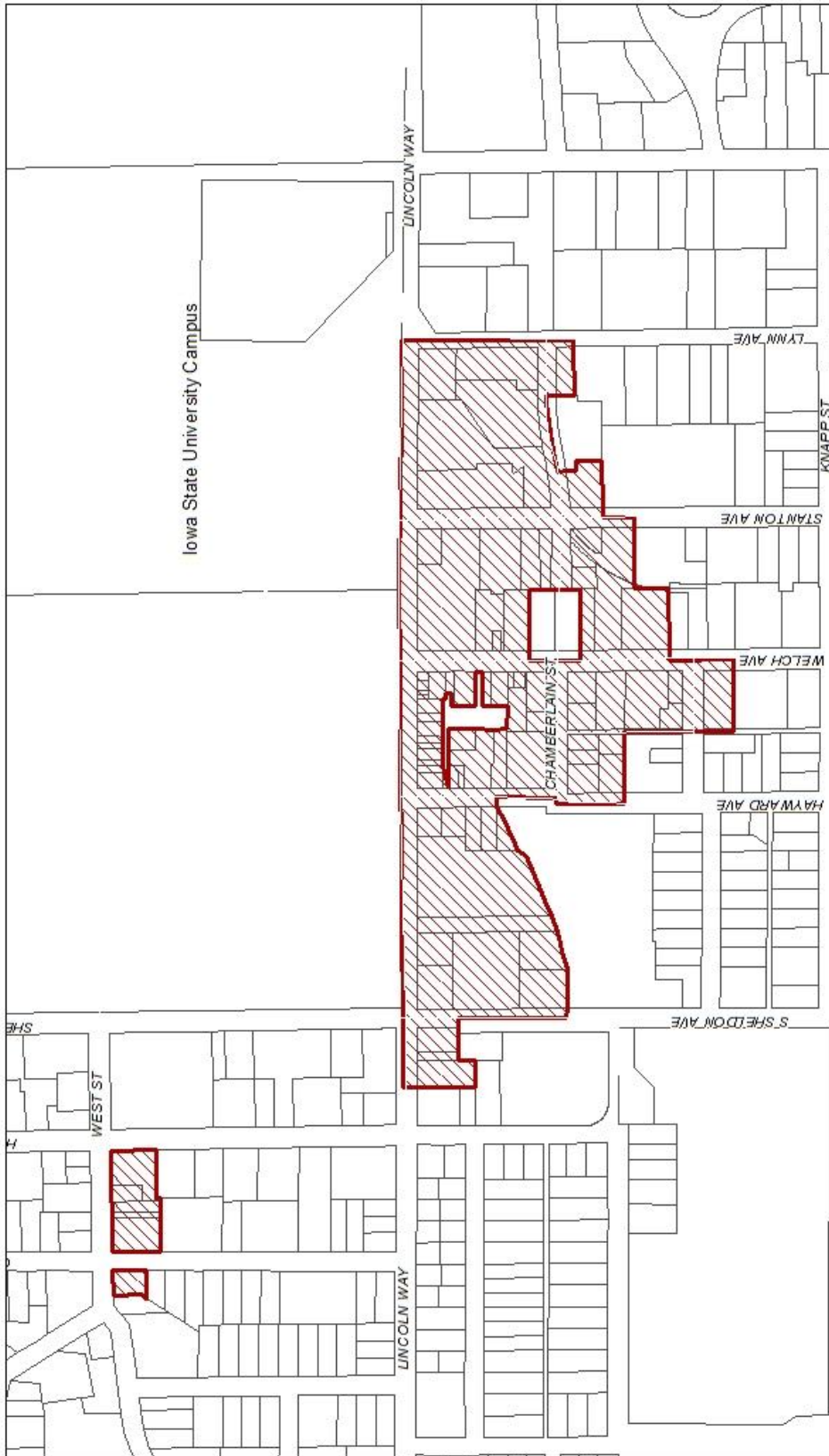
- Improvements apply to more than one story on one facade
- Improvements apply to more than one storefront on one facade
- Improvements will create more visual significance because:
  - key, highly visual elements of the building are being improved
  - the building is prominently visible due to its location (e.g., it serves as a focal point from a street, is at a prominent intersection, or is larger than other buildings around it)

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

**Maximum Score 30 Points**

- Matching funds exceed the minimum dollar-for-dollar match
- The project includes improvements being made to
  - ensure public safety,
  - establish or preserve the building's structural integrity
  - resist water and moisture penetration
  - correct other serious safety issues
- The façade project is part of a larger project that improves other exterior or interior parts of the building
- The project helps to make use of space that has been unoccupied or used only for storage

# Campustown Facade Improvement Program



 Campustown Facade Grant Eligibility Area

November 2015  
Map prepared by Ames Planning and Housing





campustown  
action  
association

Campustown Action Association  
200 Stanton Avenue, Suite 102  
Ames, IA 50014

December 17, 2015

The Honorable Ann Campbell and City Council  
Ames City Hall  
515 Clark Avenue  
Ames, IA 50010

RE: Campustown Façade Grant Program

Dear Mayor Campbell and City Council:

Campustown Action Association (CAA) appreciates the opportunity to offer further input in contributing to the provisions set forth by City staff for the Campustown Façade Grant Program. In response to the request for feedback from the City Council meeting of November 24, 2015, The following items were approved unanimously by the Board of Directors at our monthly meeting Wednesday, December 9, 2015.

- We support the suggestion by City staff to allot \$2,000 in additional funds, beyond the \$15,000 limit, allocated specifically for design professional services. This would empower businesses to make choices in construction and aesthetics, which may go beyond their areas of expertise.
- We support awarding a project more than one grant per project with a limit of \$30,000 per project. Projects considered a single-size façade may qualify for up to \$15,000. However, for much larger street-facing façades, or businesses that have façades on two adjacent sides of a street corner, these projects would qualify for up to double the typical allotment.
- We support that second floor façades be included in the grant program and agree that continuing improvements beyond the ground level contribute greatly to the identity of the neighborhood.



campustown  
action  
association

Thank you again for considering our opinions regarding this program.

Sincerely,

Rebecca J. Olson,  
Executive Director

Campustown Action Association

Ryan Jeffrey,  
Chair, Business Improvement  
Committee  
Campustown Action Association