

ITEM #: 39  
DATE: 05-09-23  
DEPT: P&H

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: AWARD OF DOWNTOWN FAÇADE GRANT FOR SPRING FY 2022-23**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Downtown Façade Grant Program was introduced in 2000 to facilitate private improvements to downtown retail and other commercial storefronts. The City Council has annually budgeted \$50,000 as matching funds for eligible projects. The program has allowed for up to \$15,000 of dollar-for-dollar matching funds per front façade and up to \$1,000 for additional architectural services. This program is available to property owners within the area generally described as from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the railroad tracks, Duff Avenue to Northwestern Avenue, and along Kellogg Avenue to Lincoln Way (Attachment A).

The program requires compliance with specified Design Guidelines that can be found on the Planning Division website at this [link](#). The program requirements include a prerequisite of a ground floor use of office or retail trade. Additionally, grant eligibility includes a requirement for proposed improvements to retain the historic façade or for the removal of non-compliant elements consistent with the guidelines or to pursue eligibility under the other façade guidelines.

**The program does not allow for maintenance activities or replacement of compliant elements with new in-kind elements as eligible activities on their own.** Proposed improvements are intended to have a significant positive visual impact on the building and the overall district. If grant requests exceed the available funding, the program criteria for front façades includes preference for façades that have not received funding in previous rounds. Attachment 2 provides an overview of the intent and process for the façade grant program, and Attachment 3 outlines the scoring criteria. Attachment 5 is the specific Eligibility Criteria.

The program is designed to operate with two application cycles. The first cycle is typically in the summer. If there are funds remaining after first round awards, then a second application round occurs in the winter/spring. The summer grant round is intended to provide funding for new projects with one grant per building. The second round is intended to fund both new projects and potentially second façades for properties that have previously received a grant.

**GRANT APPLICATION RECEIVED:**

The City solicited applications for the second round of FY 2022/23 funding in April of 2023. There were no awards for the first round. One eligible grant request was received for one property in the second round. A project summary, location map, and project design

illustrations are attached. **The available funding for the first round of FY 2022/23 is \$61,665.50. The total requested grant funding is \$5,000.00.**

<u>Address</u>	<u>Business or Building Name</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Total Project</u>
214 Main Street	(Formerly) Ames Spine & Sport	\$5,000.00	\$10,000
		<b>\$5,000.00</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

**214 MAIN STREET:**

This application is for the two-story building at 214 Main Street. The facade of the building looks as it did when it was put on during the period of significance. The current façade replaced an original Victorian façade (see Attachment 4). **The applicant proposes to install transom windows where the opening has been filled with plaster. The transom will have four windows to fill the space with a medium tone gray color. The transom windows will be opaque and not transparent in order to obscure the material located behind the transom. Unfortunately, the space does not open up into the main floor area of the building where a transparent transom would be desirable. Staff will work with the applicant to have the framing match that of existing frames on the building to avoid a disjointed appearance.** The overall design of the façade will remain the same.

The applicant has recently completed other work, including replacing the windows on the second story and replacing the plate glass on the ground level.

The property is owned by Adventure Investments, LLC, which owns several buildings in Downtown Ames. The ground level is currently occupied by RenuYou MedSpa and was previously home to Ames Spine and Sport. The building was constructed in 1880. At some point during the period of significance for Main Street (1920-1950), the original façade was removed and the current one erected. Little about the current façade has since changed since it was installed. The building is a contributing structure to the National Register Ames Main Street Historic District.

The total estimated cost for 214 Main Street is \$10,000 of eligible work. The applicant is not requesting reimbursement for design services. At the time of reimbursement, the applicant will need to provide cost breakdowns to ensure only eligible activities are funded with the façade grant.

<b>WORK</b>	<b>ELIGIBLE COST ESTIMATES</b>	<b>TOTAL COST ESTIMATES</b>
Transom Glass	10,000	10,000
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve a Downtown Façade Improvement Grant for 214 Main Street for up to \$5,000 of the \$10,000 in estimated eligible costs for a new transom with framing to match existing window frames on the building.
2. Approve a grant award for a lesser amount.
3. Do not approve a façade grant award.

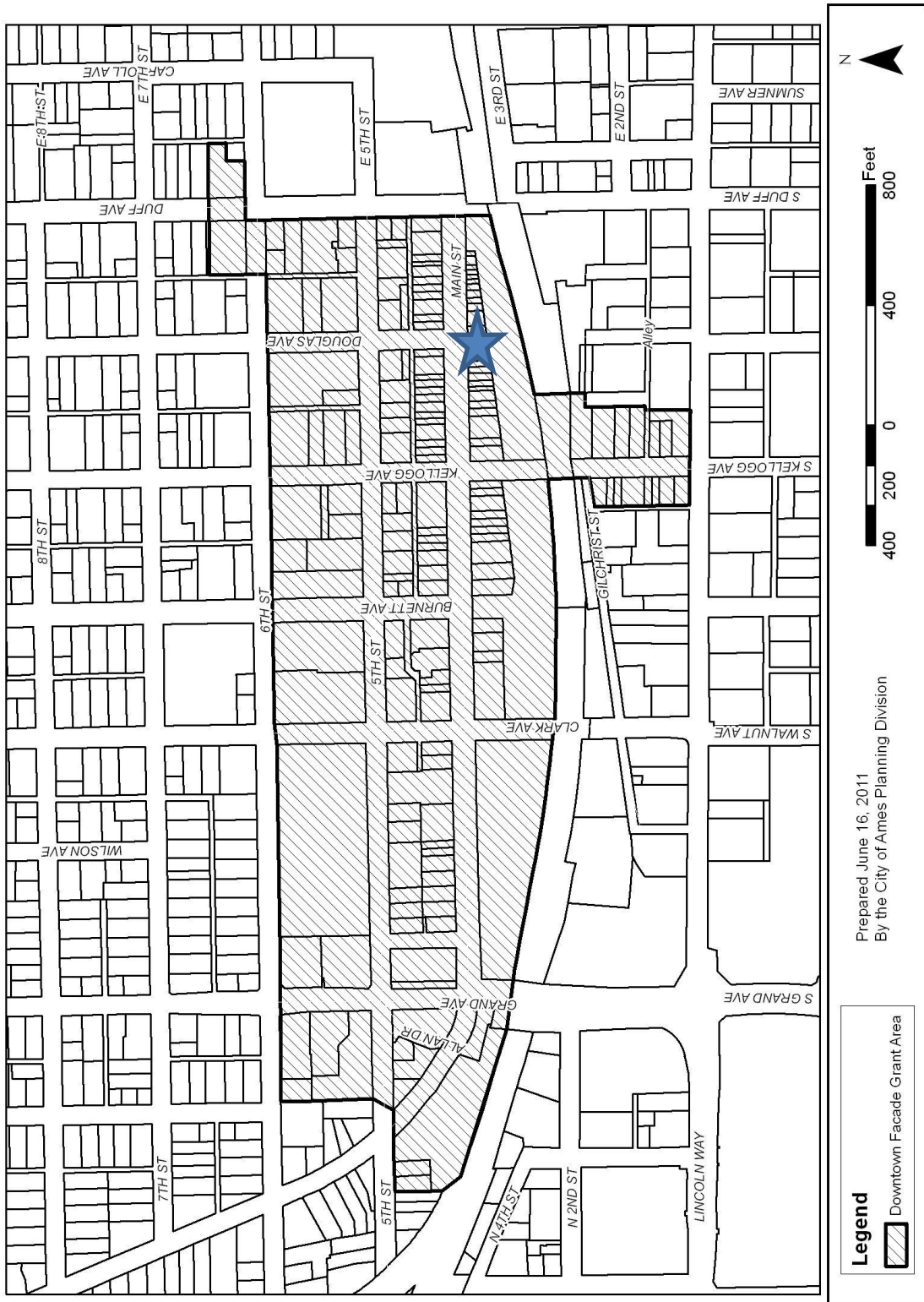
**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

This round of grant application solicitation resulted in one request involving one building in the amount of \$10,000 in total costs. City staff has determined that the proposed Downtown Façade Improvement project for the building at 214 Main Street complies with the design requirements of the program. There is adequate funding available for the request as no other competing applications were submitted.

**Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, as described above.**

# Downtown Facade Grant Area

## Attachment A Eligibility Map



Prepared June 16, 2011  
By the City of Ames Planning Division

**Legend**  
Downtown Facade Grant Area

## **Attachment B Downtown Façade Grant Review**

### *Requirements for all Façade Grants*

- The building must be located downtown within boundaries established by City Council.
- The ground floor must be Office Uses or Trade Uses as defined by the Ames zoning ordinance.
- The façade design must comply with Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Improvements to historic façades shall include replacing non-compliant elements with compliant elements.
- Residential structures and buildings owned by the government, churches and other religious institutions are not eligible.
- No façade grant shall exceed \$15,000.

### *Program Logistics*

The following process for review of applications for façade grants provides time to inform all potential applicants of the opportunity, to work with applicants, applicants to prepare submittals and for staff to review applications and report to City Council. Two grant periods will be planned for each fiscal year.

#### First Grant Period

For this first grant period, preference for grant awards will be given to:

- façades that have not received any previous grant funding
- front façades

#### Action Steps:

- Staff will inform all property and business owners of grant availability, process, and deadlines.
- Staff will work with applicants to define the project, ensure that it meets the guidelines, and assure that it is feasible and can be completed within the time frame.
- Applications will be accepted in May and June.
- Staff will review and score applications and report to City Council in July or August for awarding grants.
- Projects may then start in the fall and be potentially completed before the holiday shopping season.

#### Second Grant Period

If the entire budget is not committed in the first grant period in each year, a second grant period will begin in October for projects to be implemented the following spring. While façades on Main Street and façades for which no previous grants have been awarded will still receive first preference in this second grant period, all downtown grant requests will be considered and potentially approved if funds remain after all first-preference proposals are awarded.

#### Conditions of Grant Approval

- Grant projects must be completed within one year from award of grant.
- Any required building code and/or safety improvements to a structure must be completed before grant work proceeds or before grant funds are paid.

## **Attachment C Scoring Criteria**

For each category, the following criteria shall be used to award points:

### **VISUAL IMPACT** **Maximum Score 30 Points**

- Improvements apply to more than one story on one façade
- Improvements apply to more than one 25-foot wide bay on one façade
- 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

### **EXTENT OF IMPROVEMENTS** **Maximum Score 20 Points**

The number points granted in this category shall be based upon the number of elements from the Downtown Design Guidelines being improved. More improved elements deserve more points.

#### **HISTORIC FAÇADES (such as Café Diem):**

- Display windows
- Transoms
- Masonry (includes removing cover-up)
- Upper floor windows
- Parapet and cornices
- Awnings and canopies
- Entrance
- Kickplate

#### **OTHER FAÇADES (such as Wheatsfield):**

- Quality materials
- Façade modulation
- Fenestration
- Roof
- Awnings
- Building entrances

### **HISTORIC DESIGN** **Maximum Score 20 Points**

- Project includes historically appropriate materials and restoration techniques
- Project goes beyond basic rehabilitation and re-establishes a more historically accurate appearance than other projects

**Attachment D  
214 Main Street**



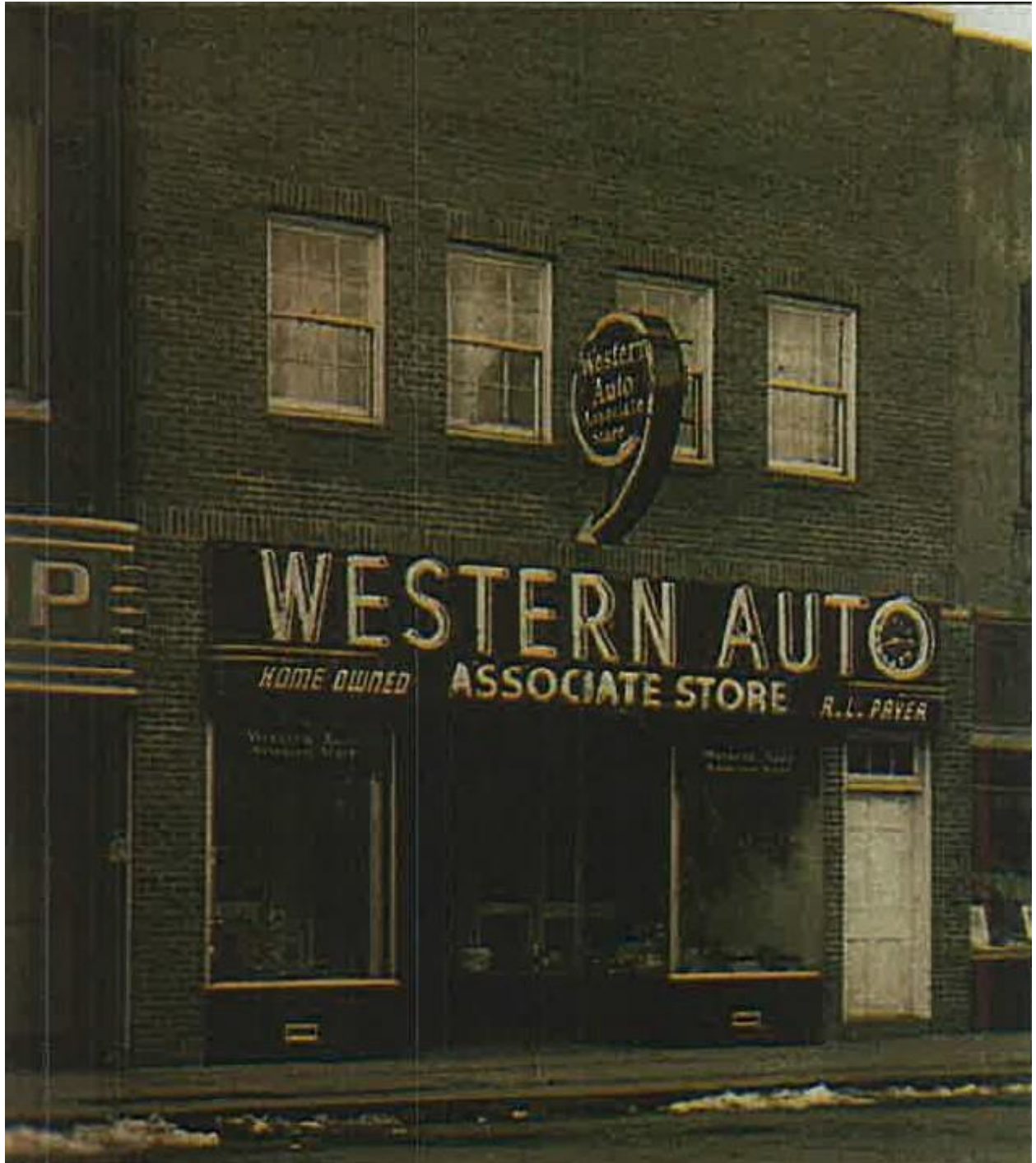
Current Façade for 214 Main Street





Original Façade for 214 Main Street





Revised Façade for 214 Main Street