

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **FY 17/18 CAMPUSTOWN FAÇADE GRANT**

BACKGROUND:

The Campustown Façade Program was developed to enhance the appearance of Campustown commercial buildings, fulfilling the City Council's objective of supporting Campustown. The goal of this program is to promote diverse building styles and increased activity and commercial use. This program supports enriching the individual detail and character of each building within the context of a pedestrian oriented commercial district. The City Council identified the Campustown Service Center zoning district south of the ISU Campus and Neighborhood Commercial zoning district on West Street as the areas within which properties are eligible for project grants. (See Attachment A)

This program has one round of façade grant awards per year. The grants are for up to \$15,000 of matching funds at a 1 for 1 ratio of applicant expense to City expense. Each project may be awarded up to two façade grants when there are multiple facades with a project. The program also includes the allowance for up to \$2,000 in additional funding for design fees when a project includes a licensed design professional. Projects are scored on visual impact, financial impact, and consistency with the Idea Book concepts. (See Attachment B, Scoring Criteria) A project must have a commercial use on the ground floor, but upper floors of a building that includes residential or commercial uses may be included in a grant request. Façades eligible for funding must be street facing and improvements must be permanent improvements to the façades.

City Council budgeted \$50,000 in FY 2017/18 for the Campustown Façade Program. There is also \$36,000 remaining from FY 16/17 after last year's awards. The combined total of funds that may be awarded as part of this grant period is \$86,000.

City staff solicited grant applications for this program in February. An invitation for grant applications was sent to all eligible property and business owners in the façade program area and was also publicized by Campustown Action Association and other media outlets. Two applications were submitted, but only one application was complete enough to meet the criteria.

That grant application is for the property at 120 Welch Avenue. The applicant requests a grant for \$15,000 in façade improvements with an additional \$2,000 in design fee assistance. Project information and design illustrations are attached for the proposed project. (See Attachment C)

According to the approved Campustown Façade Program, each year project applications are reviewed for grant funding based on the design concepts of the Idea

Book as noted below. A façade project must further the goals of the design concepts and not substantially detract from other design concepts in the Idea Book. A façade improvement that replaces an existing, compliant façade is not eligible for funding.

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.

120 WELCH AVENUE PROJECT APPLICATION

The existing building at 120 Welch Avenue will be refaced with a new limestone veneer façade and larger store front windows. New storefront windows and door are proposed on the first floor to increase the amount of glazing to meet the minimum 50% CSC glazing standard. A new steel canopy and lighting is proposed to project over the commercial entrance and new commercial signage is proposed for the building.

The existing building at 120 Welch Avenue will maintain the existing brick on the area above the commercial area. However, the two existing windows will be replaced with four new windows. The existing brick detailing at the top of the building will remain and be painted. Lighting fixtures will be added just above the proposed canopy that will cast light downward to light the sign and façade of the building. Any areas of the building projecting into the right of way, including the canopy and lighting, will require approval of a City encroachment permit.

Consistent with the *Diverse Campustown* design concept, the appearance of this façade will be distinct from other buildings in the Campustown area with inclusion of a limestone veneer at the street level. Elements of the design are similar to the Arcadia

Cafe that abuts the site. The *Social Campustown* design concept is met in combination with enlarged storefront windows, new entrance canopy and new lighting at the business entrance. The *Transparency Concept* of the Idea Book is improved for the building with the increased amount of storefront windows allowing for better views into the commercial spaces and added windows on the second floor. New signage will also help to better identify the building.

The project estimate submitted by the applicant shows the façade project cost of \$55,725 for front façade work. Based on the estimates submitted, staff has calculated the project costs for just the exterior front façade work to be approximately \$51,525 with an additional \$4,200 in design fees. The calculated eligible costs exceed the 1 to 1 matching funds ratio for the projects. The proposed project is eligible to receive the requested total of \$17,000 consisting of \$15,000 in grant awards and design fees in the amount of \$2,000.

Notice to proceed with the project upon award of the grants will require compliance with the City's zoning requirements before receiving grant funds. An encroachment permit for the awnings will also be necessary.

ALTERNATIVES:

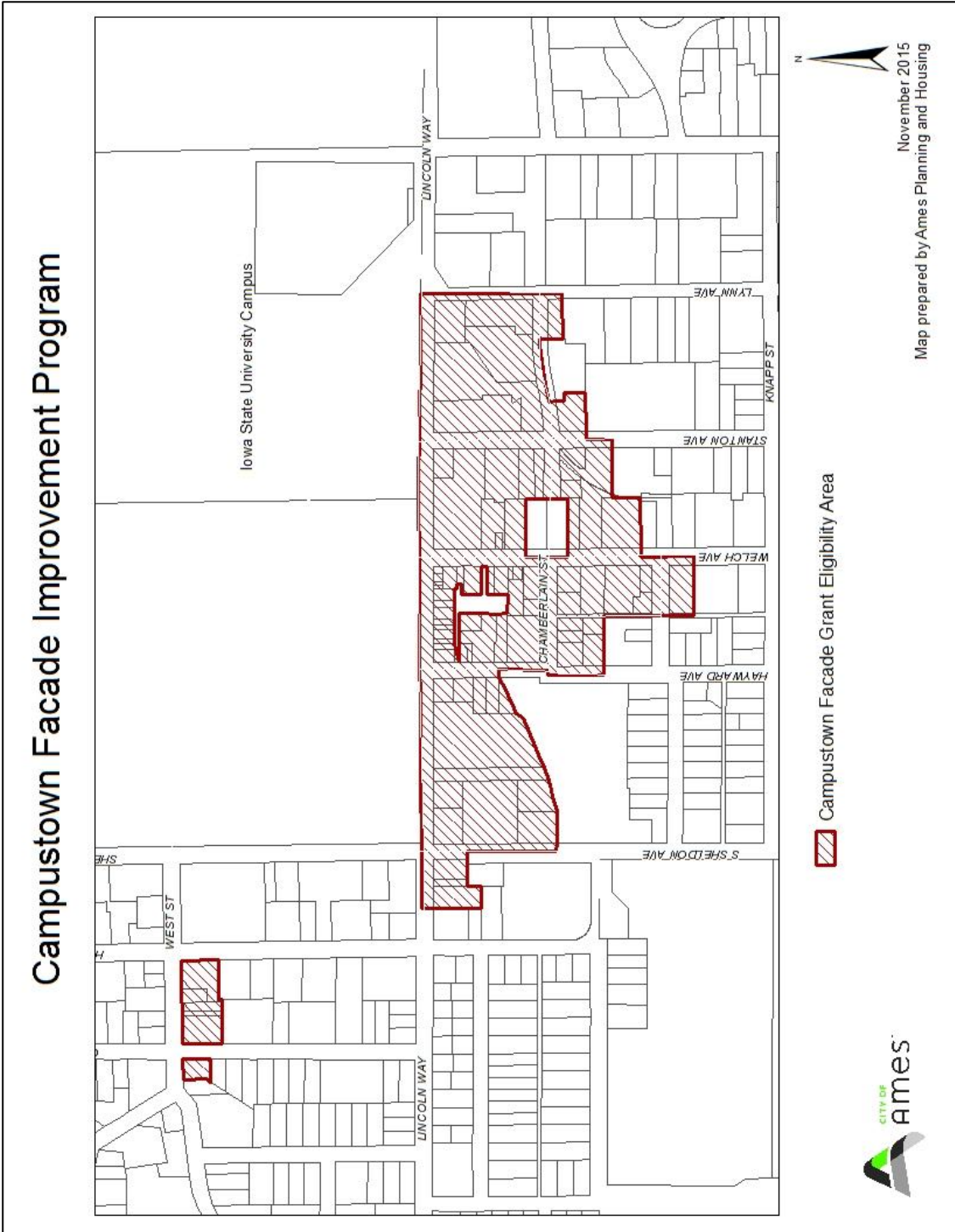
1. The City Council can approve a Campustown Façade Grant for the project at 120 Welch Avenue, awarding \$15,000 in grant funding with an additional \$2,000 in design fees for a total grant award of \$17,000 for the overall project with the following condition:
 - a. Approval of encroachment permits must be received for any canopy or building projection over the property line into the right of way.
2. The City Council can approve an alternative grant amount for the project that the Council finds meet its priorities for Campustown façades.
3. The City Council can refer this request back to staff or the applicants for additional information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The new façade meets the intentions of the Campustown façade program and the Campustown Idea Book in that the proposed improvements greatly enhance the appearance of the building and add to the social and design character of Campustown. The project will also contribute to increased vitality and economic development through private investment in the area.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council accept Alternative #1 as stated above.

Attachment A



Attachment B

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

Attachment B

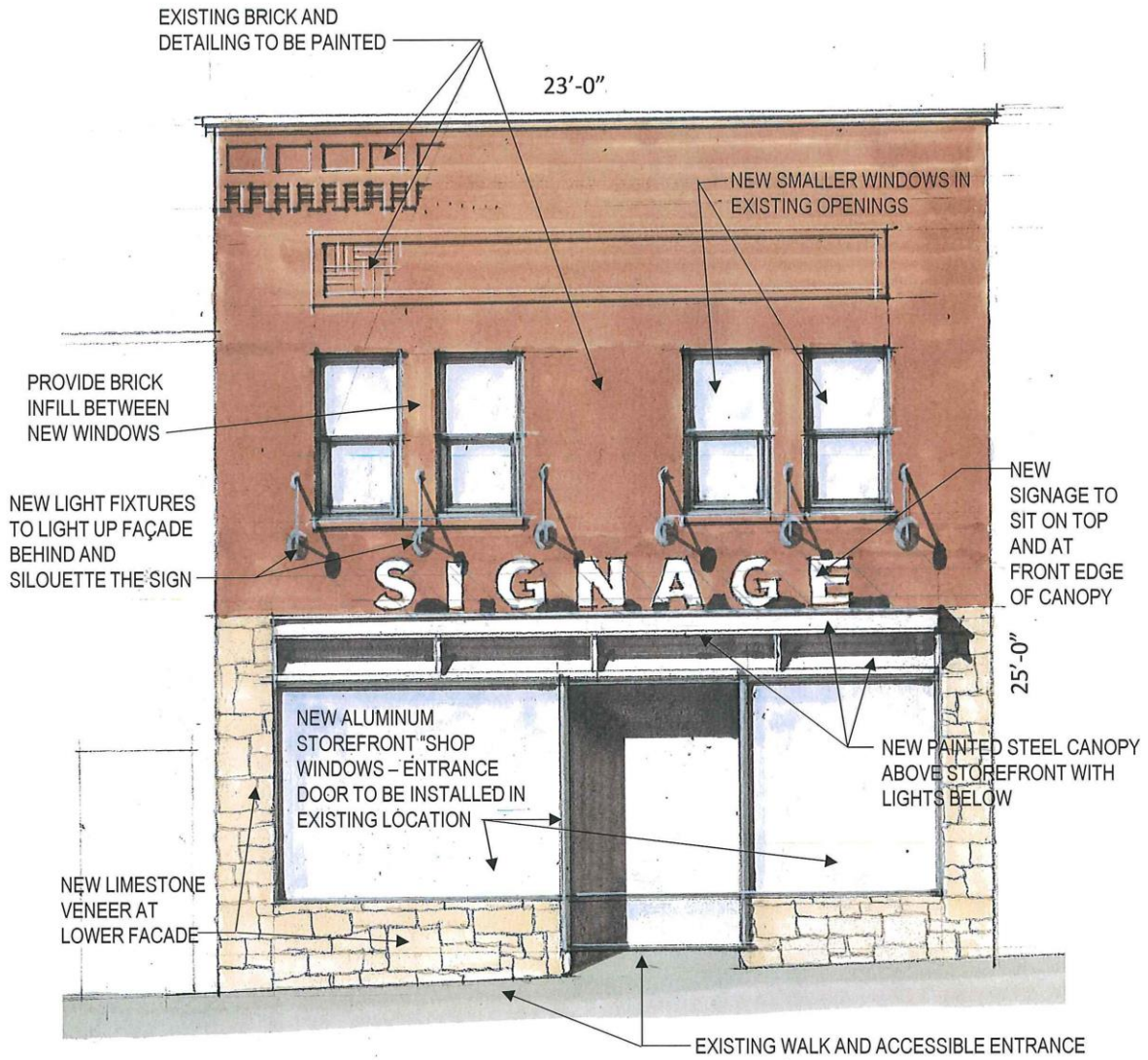


Prepared: 22 Feb 2018

120 WELCH AVENUE - AMES, IOWA

City of Ames - Campustown Façade Grant Application





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