

ITEM #:	51
DATE:	07-14-26
DEPT:	P&H

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN FACADE GRANTS

BACKGROUND:

The Downtown Facade Grant Program was introduced in 2000 to facilitate private improvements to downtown retail and other commercial storefronts (Attachment A). City Council has modified the program requirements multiple times within the past several years, mostly recently last year to allow for a new type of grant for exterior building maintenance and rear facades of historic buildings. The program has two funding rounds with different priorities, a fall round for primarily front facade improvements and a spring round for front facades, historic rehabilitation, maintenance, and rear facades.

The City Council annually budgets \$75,000 as matching funds for eligible projects. The program has allowed for up to \$23,000 of dollar-for-dollar matching funds per front facade and maintenance as well as up to \$2,000 for additional architectural and engineering services. For the spring 2025/26 fiscal year, the remaining available funding for the Downtown Facade Grant Program is \$168,290. Projects that were previously approved, but not yet started or completed are not included in the available funding amount.

The program requires compliance with specified Design Guidelines that can be found on the Planning Division webpage. 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 facade or for the removal of non-compliant elements consistent with the guidelines or to pursue eligibility under the Other facade guidelines.

The program was modified recently to allow for the rehabilitation of historically significant, character-defining features of contributing historic resources in the National Register Downtown Historic District. This work includes restoration of original windows or distinct architectural features such as parapet walls. Further program modifications made exterior walls, roofs, and foundations eligible for maintenance and allowed for rear facades to receive grant funding in compliance with the Design Guidelines.

Proposed improvements are intended to have significant positive visual impact on the building and the overall district. If grant requests exceed the available funding, the program criteria for front facades includes preference for facades that have not received funding in previous rounds. Attachment B provides an overview of the intent and process for the facade grant program, and Attachment C outlines scoring criteria. Subsequent Attachments are the current applications.

GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED:

The City solicited applications for the second round of FY 2025/26 funding in the spring of 2026. **Six complete applications are being considered for this second round: five applications are for maintenance and one is for a traditional facade grant.** The traditional grant and one of the maintenance grants are for the same building. (An additional application, not included, was ineligible.) A project summary, location map, and project design illustrations are attached. **Staff calculated the total request of eligible grant funding to be \$137,309.73. The program has adequate funding to meet all requests.**

Address	Business or Building Name	Staff Recommended Award	Total Project (applicant estimates)
118 Main Street (Traditional)	Ann's Insurance, Inc. (tenant)	\$23,000	\$53,365.09
118 Main Street (Maintenance)	Ann's Insurance, Inc. (tenant)	\$14,509.73	\$29,019.47
413 Kellogg Avenue (Maintenance)	10Fold Architecture + Engineering	\$25,000	\$60,000
236 Main Street (Maintenance)	Gilger Designs	\$25,000	\$53,400
203, 205, & 207 Main Street (Maintenance)	Tilden Store Building (Dog-Eared Books)	\$25,000	\$62,000
226-228 Main Street (Maintenance)	Moorman Clothiers	\$24,800	\$84,868.50
TOTAL		\$137,309.73	\$342,653.06

118 Main Street (Two Grants):

The building at 118 Main Street is one in a series of shallow buildings at the east end of Main Street. The lots on which these buildings sit are small because of the curve of the railroad tracks was built close to Main Street at this location. The building was constructed in the 1900's. The tenant of the building is Ann's Insurance, Inc.

Several of these buildings under the same ownership as 118 Main Street have received traditional facade grants. The proposal is to make front facade changes that will alter the building to look like its companion properties to the east.

The front door out onto the Main Street sidewalk is currently setback so that when the door swings out, it does not project into the right-of-way. The applicant's proposal is to have the door flush with the front facade. **Planning and Building Inspections staff do not want to see the door flush with the front facade. If the door is not recessed, it will open into the sidewalk creating a hazard for pedestrians.**

Staff recommends the facade design be changed to recess the door. The owner of this building has received several other grants for neighboring buildings that have the same design. These buildings contain a mix of doors that are both recessed and flush with the front facade. While it is not clear why the flush design was not caught at the time of permitting, staff

does not want to permit further designs where a door opens out into the street.

The owner is also proposing to use a maintenance grant to make repairs to the rear of the building. Some of the work proposed, including replacing a door and sidelight and replacing a downspout, are not eligible. The applicant will need to submit receipts to demonstrate that only eligible work is requested for reimbursement.

Work (Traditional)	Eligible Cost Estimates	Total Cost Estimates
New Facade: - new masonry - new entry - labor and materials	\$53,365.09	\$53,365.09
Total	\$53,365.09	\$53,365.09

The City match is \$23,000 for a total of \$23,000.

Work (Maintenance)	Eligible Cost Estimates	Total Cost Estimates
Work: - Masonry, including repair to mortar - Roofing & flashing	\$29,019.47	\$29,019.47
Total	\$29,019.47	\$29,019.47

The City match is \$14,509.73 for a total of \$14,509.73.

413 Kellogg Avenue:

The building at 413 Kellogg Avenue was built as a bank in the 1940s. It was later converted to use as a general office building, though it remains essentially unchanged since it was built. The building is home to 10Fold Architecture + Engineering.

The applicant is proposing to make repairs to the brick, including spalling, on the front facade on Kellogg Avenue. This will involve making repairs to the mortar and repairs to the parapet wall at the top of the building. The repairs will help to solve moisture penetration.

Work (Maintenance)	Eligible Cost Estimates	Total Cost Estimates
Brick Demolition	\$6,000	\$6,000
Waterproofing & Flashing	\$5,000	\$5,000
New Face Brick	\$47,000	\$47,000
Professional Design Fees	\$2,000	\$2,000
Total	\$60,000	\$60,000

The City match is \$23,000 plus \$2,000 in design fees for a total of \$25,000.

236 Main Street:

The building at 236 Main Street is home to Gilger Designs and was constructed in the 1900s. Although the ground level has changed since the facade was erected, the second story and the cornice remain unchanged since they were erected.

The applicant is requesting grant funding for the following work:

- Repairing the exterior brick and stucco, including flues, flashing, and parapet

The bricks on the facade are spalling in places and there cracks in the bricks and mortar. These are allowing moisture to penetrate, which the grant seeks to remedy.

Work (Maintenance)	Eligible Cost Estimates	Total Cost Estimates
North Facade Masonry Lintel Restoration	\$36,000	\$36,000
West & South Facades masonry Repair and Parge Coat	\$10,000	\$10,000
Electrical		\$1,000
Design Fees	\$6,400	\$6,400
Total	\$52,400	\$53,400

The City match is \$23,000 plus \$2,000 in design fees for a total of \$25,000.

203, 205, & 207 Main Street:

The building at 203, 205, and 207 Main Street is home to Dog-Eared Books. It was constructed in 1870s, although its appearance has changed since that time. The owners of Dog-Eared Books recently purchased the building.

The applicants are requesting grant funding for the following work:

- Repair the cornice and the belt course above the first floor to make them watertight
- Repair the foundation, particularly the mortar in the stone walls
- Repair the masonry on the rear (alley) side of the building

Work (Maintenance)	Eligible Cost Estimates	Total Cost Estimates
Front Facade, Basement Foundation, & Rear (Alley) Brick	\$60,000	\$60,000+
Professional Design Fees	\$2,000	\$2,000
Total	\$62,000	\$62,000+

The City match is \$23,000 plus \$2,000 in design fees for a total of \$25,000.

226-228 Main Street:

The buildings at 226-228 Main Street were both built in the 1890s. They are home to Moorman Clothiers.

The applicant is requesting funds to make exterior repairs to the rear walls of the building and to the exterior of the foundation.

Work (Maintenance)	Eligible Cost Estimates	Total Cost Estimates
Lift Rental	\$3,500	\$3,500
SW Wall Area: - Repair brick and exterior plaster	\$25,678.50	\$25,648.50
East Wall Area: - Repair brick and exterior plaster, including foundation	\$30,690	\$30,690
Paint Work		\$23,200
Design Fees	\$1,800	\$1,800
Total	\$61,668.50	\$84,868.50

The City match is \$23,000 plus \$1,800 in design fees for a total of \$24,800.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Downtown Facade Improvement and Maintenance Grants as proposed by the applicants for:
 - a. 118 Main Street (Traditional) for up to \$23,000 in estimated eligible costs for facade repairs and requiring the front door to be recessed.
 - b. 118 Main Street (Maintenance) for up to \$14,509.73 in estimated eligible costs for facade and roof repairs.
 - c. 413 Kellogg Avenue (Maintenance) for up to \$23,000 in estimated eligible costs for facade repairs and \$2,000 in design fees.
 - d. 236 Main Street (Maintenance) for up to \$23,000 in estimated eligible costs for facade repairs and \$2,000 in design fees.
 - e. 203, 205, and 207 Main Street (Maintenance) for up to \$23,000 in estimate eligible costs for facade and foundation repairs and \$2,000 in design fees.
 - f. 226-228 Main Street (Maintenance) for up to \$23,000 in estimate eligible costs for facade and foundation repairs and \$1,800 in design fees.
2. Modify the award amounts, conditions, or decline to award a grant to any or all of the applicants based upon the finding that any of the proposed projects do not meet the intent of the program or its requirements.
3. Defer action and ask staff or the applicant(s) for additional information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Downtown Facade Grant application solicitation has resulted in six requests for a total of \$137,309.73. A seventh request was submitted for maintenance, but the building is not a contributing resource to the Ames Main Street National Register Historic District.

City staff has determined that the proposed Downtown Facade Improvement projects for the buildings at 118 Main Street, 413 Kellogg Avenue, 236 Main Street, 203, 205, & 207 Main Street, and 226-228 Main Street comply with the requirements of the program. There is adequate funding available for the requests. Therefore, is it the recommendation of the City Manager that the Council approve Alternative #1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Attachment A - Eligibility Maps.pdf](#)

[Attachment B - Program Overview.pdf](#)

[Attachment C - Scoring Criteria.pdf](#)

[Attachment D - 118 Main Street \(Traditional Facade Grant\).pdf](#)

[Attachment E - 118 Main Street \(Maintenance\).pdf](#)

[Attachment F - 413 Kellogg Avenue \(Maintenance\).pdf](#)

[Attachment G - 236 Main Street \(Maintenance\).pdf](#)

[Attachment H - 203, 205, and 207 Main Street \(Maintenance\).pdf](#)

[Attachment I - 226-228 Main Street \(Maintenance\).pdf](#)