

SUBMITTED BY: Jennifer Smith, Community Services & Economic Development Director
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MANAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW: Ana Urquijo, City Manager

FOCUS AREA: Other / NA

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS: N/A

SUBJECT: **HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM for DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Staff will introduce for discussion a historic preservation program, an additional element to Downtown Revitalization efforts.

BACKGROUND:

Douglas 2032 calls for Downtown Revitalization as a policy priority for Mayor and Council. In 2019, staff initiated the Streetscape Plan to assist in the revitalization of downtown G Avenue. The Streetscape Plan addresses one element in the downtown revitalization efforts. Another element to these efforts calls for a Historic Preservation Program to address structural integrity issues of downtown buildings, a growing concern from our downtown business owners and community.

In seeking solutions to address the structural integrity of our historic downtown buildings, staff researched various economic development tools which allow the City to engage in a program with the private sector. Staff found multiple cities that have programs which can be used to model our own initiative in Douglas like a Historic Preservation Program.

A Historic Preservation Program can function to preserve our historic downtown's threatened properties. Such a program would fund projects rehabilitating building exteriors, as well as provide funding for interior structural and roofing restoration work to support the stabilization, restoration, rehabilitation, preservation, or in-kind reconstruction of the building's exterior skin.

City of Phoenix and City of Sierra Vista have similar programs and provided staff with information on how they were able to establish their programs as well as their eligibility requirements. City of Phoenix can provide funding for major renovation through a conservation easement with the property owner. Effectively, a conservation easement gives City of Phoenix non-possessory interest on the exterior and interior surfaces of the structure, including the roof, which they provided funding towards. The City of Sierra Vista, on the other hand, does not require execution of a conservation easement agreement, rather they established a redevelopment area boundary driven by a Finding of Necessity report. The City of Sierra Vista only provides their grant opportunities to commercial structures that exist within the defined redevelopment area boundary and focus on exterior improvements as directed by their Mayor and Council.

Using the examples from the City of Phoenix and the City of Sierra Vista, Douglas can integrate both strategies to better serve our community and preserve the structural integrity of downtown buildings without violating the Arizona Gift Clause.

DISCUSSION:

Staff will present some preliminary concepts of how this type of program will work and seek feedback from Mayor and Council on the idea of creating a Historic Preservation Program.

Presentation only.