



*Where Life is Sweet*

Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**STAFF REPORT**  
For the Meeting of February 27, 2023

**Title/Subject**

Revisions to the scoring criteria and award match for facade grants are proposed.

**Summary and Background**

The planning commission acts as the reviewing body for façade grant applications in the downtown urban renewal district. As a body they score applications and recommend an award amount to the urban renewal board. The planning commission has repeatedly raised concerns about the scoring criteria being overly vague and subjective. At the February 8, 2023 meeting, the commission reviewed the existing criteria and recommended several amendments to them, making them easier to apply to development review.

The planning commission's revised criteria allow for greater flexibility and objectivity in scoring grants while still maintaining defined parameters. Each existing criterion is *italicized*, and the proposed revised criterion is in **bold** as outlined below.

1. *Are the proposed improvements consistent with type of architectural features found in the existing historical buildings in the district?*

Recommend **eliminating** the question and use five criteria instead of six.

2. *Are the proposed improvements designed to contribute to the long-term health of the district? For example, landscape improvements are not as durable as masonry.*

**Are the proposed improvements designed to contribute to the long-term health of the site and district? For example, landscape improvements are not as durable as masonry.**

3. *Does the proposed improvement contain features designed to contribute to aesthetic enhancement?*

**Does the proposal add new aesthetic elements beyond the existing site conditions?**

4. *Will the proposed improvements contribute not only to the enhancement of the commercial use, but the downtown as a whole?*

**Will the proposed improvements enhance the economic well-being of the downtown as well as the site?**

5. *Are the proposed improvements compatible with the overall downtown character?*

**Are the proposed elements scaled properly for the site and of compatible color and materials for properties within 300 feet?**

6. *Will the proposed improvements enhance the value of the property and provide a good return on investment for the district?*

Recommend this question **remain as written**.

The planning commission also recommends a change to the Façade Grant award amount. The matching grant award is currently capped at \$10,000. Due to the overall increase in construction costs, it was determined that a maximum matching cap of \$20,000 per grant application is appropriate. Staff has reviewed the cost of construction interviewing both local commercial builders and grant recipients. A \$20,000 cap is appropriate given the increases in material and labor costs.

**Tie-In to Council Goals**

N/A

**Fiscal Information**

Increasing the match amount will decrease the number of grants available each year. Under the urban renewal plan, a maximum of \$500,000 is available over the life of the district. When all funds are expended, the program may be terminated or reallocation of funds from other projects will be needed. Given the popularity of the program, it may be more beneficial to consider what projects should be sacrificed to allocate additional money to grants.

**Alternatives and Recommendation**

Alternatives

Approve the revisions to the façade grant criteria and increase the matching cap award to \$20,000.

Revise the criteria and cap amount.

Keep the existing criteria and current matching cap amount.

Recommended Action/Motion

Motion to adopt the Façade Grant Criteria revisions.

Motion to increase the Façade Grant award matching cap to \$20,000.

**Submitted By:**

Clinton Spencer, Planning Director