**Overview and Proposed Changes to the Façade Improvement Program**

4-17-17

**Façade Improvement Program**

1. Current façade program has resulted in noticeable improvements to URD buildings
2. Current limitations have resulted in less than optimal improvements throughout the downtown corridor
3. The physical appearance of downtown corridor buildings still remains a concern by residents and visitors alike
   1. This was identified in community visioning sessions conducted in 2009
4. Many of the current viable businesses operating along the Hwy 38 corridor that need façade improvements and/or are interested in improvements lack the ability to effectively utilize the façade improvement grant program. These projects far exceed the current $2,500 max allowed by the program.
   1. They lack the capital to prioritize exterior improvements
   2. The projects that have been identified are not financially possible
   3. Many of the buildings that need façade improvement are historical in nature, and offer some of the last remaining viable connections to Reedsport’s history. They offer the best opportunity to preserve and promote Reedsport’s authenticity.

**Best-Practices Research**

1. University of Wisconsin-Madison Study
   1. The impact of storefront improvements are generally felt district-wide
      1. Improvements made to one building have an effect on adjacent and nearby properties
         1. Increased pedestrian traffic
         2. Increased sales
         3. Increased rents
         4. Increased property values
         5. Increased community pride
         6. …Results in higher tax revenue…
   2. National Trust for Historic Preservation—“Dollars and Sense”
      1. Sales improvements sustained for several years
      2. Sales increases exceeded increase in local tax
      3. Improvements attracted new businesses
      4. Participants were often motivated to make additional interior improvements
2. University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
   * 1. Best-practices for façade programs
        1. The grant should cover 50-75% of the total project cost—**especially** in areas where business owners are struggling and/or lack access to capital
        2. Provide design services
        3. Establish grants to mandate ideal designs
        4. Communicate one-on-one with property/business owners
        5. Have a straight-forward application

**New Specifications**

1. Option 2
   1. Two Tiers

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Cost** | **City Contribution** | **Owner Contribution** |
| + $6,000 | 75% ($10,000 max) | 25% |
| Up to $5,999 | 50% | 50% |

* 1. Increasing the match ratio and maximum amount awarded and will allow the City/URD/Main Street Program to better promote larger and more significant façade projects.
  2. Small façade project grants are necessary and important. However, the ability to assist with larger, more significant projects is needed. Changing the terms of the grant program reduces constraints and would allow a greater impact to be made to the downtown corridor as opportunities present themselves.
  3. Focus on buildings with current SHPO consultant design specs (buildings with viable businesses should receive priority).
  4. Project proposals should be selected which will provide the greatest visual impact and greatest benefit.