

**CITY OF SYCAMORE
DOWNTOWN & GATEWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS
FY2017-18**

The City of Sycamore has two building improvement programs: the downtown improvement program and the gateway improvement program.

Downtown Improvement Program

Purpose: The City of Sycamore values the overall appearance and historic architecture of Sycamore’s downtown business district. To promote the charming appearance of these buildings, and to assist property owners in making high quality building improvements, the City has set aside general capital funds that may be available to qualified applicants through a revised downtown improvement program. For projects that meet or exceed program guidelines and receive the unqualified support of the Architectural Review Committee, the Council may provide a matching grant up to \$5,000.00 per building.

Eligibility: To be eligible for funding under the Downtown Improvement Program, the building must be located within the Downtown Business District, as defined by the Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1. Because this program is primarily focused on the historic preservation of existing downtown buildings, projects consisting largely of new construction and business expansion (except into an adjoining downtown building) are not eligible. Residential buildings within the business district may be eligible provided improvements are consistent with the appearance and architecture of the downtown.

Either a property owner or a business owner in a leased unit may apply for this program. However, the property owner must sign the application form, and grant consent for the tenant to pursue funding for the property as well as the proposed work to occur at the property. In the case of one building owner with multiple tenants or storefronts, a determination as to the eligibility of any or all tenancies will be made on the merits of the proposal.

Gateway Improvement Program

Purpose: The City of Sycamore values the overall appearance of Sycamore’s gateway areas. To promote the aesthetic appearance of these buildings, and to assist property owners in making high quality building improvements, the City has set aside general capital funds that may be available to qualified applicants through a revised gateway improvement program. For projects that meet or exceed program guidelines and receive the unqualified support of the Architectural Review Committee, the Council may provide a matching grant up to \$5,000.00 per building.

Eligibility: To be eligible for funding under the Gateway Improvement Program, the building must be located within the gateway area; which includes properties fronting Illinois Route 64 from Airport Road to Peace Road and properties along North Main Street from Illinois 64 to the Kishwaukee River. Projects consisting largely of new construction and business expansion are not eligible. Only properties being used for commercial use are eligible to apply. Residential rental properties are ineligible.

No work can begin until the City Council approves the project. Work performed prior to City Council action is not eligible.

Either a property owner or a business owner in a leased unit may apply for this program. However, the property owner must sign the application form, and grant consent for the tenant to pursue funding for the property as well as the proposed work to occur at the property. In the case of one building owner with multiple tenants or storefronts, a determination as to the eligibility of any or all tenancies will be made on the merits of the proposal.

Availability of Funding: The application period will begin in April and will close on May 31st. Applications will be reviewed after the application period has closed. Applications submitted after May 31st will be considered on a case-by-case basis provided funding is available. An individual property owner or tenant may only receive funding for one project during a two-year cycle. More than one project may be approved for a particular building over time, but not within a two-year period. The availability of funding is annually dependent on the Council's authorization of capital spending for such purposes. The City will match the property owner's investment in façade improvements on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to \$5,000. Due to limited funding, projects will be considered on a competitive basis. Projects may receive partial funding in order to maximize the overall impact of the grant funds.

Appearance and Maintenance: The general goal of this program is to provide a unifying and welcoming appearance to the gateway area, without erasing the diverse architectural styles that exist. To reach this objective, it is not expected that buildings will be made to look the same; rather, it is assumed that the program will assure that they relate more harmoniously in terms of proportion, materials, color, and architectural heritage.

Eligible Improvements: Each application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All improvements must generally achieve at least one of two general objectives: (a) improve the overall aesthetic nature of the building or (b) bring the structure into compliance with locally-adopted building codes. Only exterior repairs or improvements to façades abutting pedestrian walks generally used by the public will be considered, although related interior finish work may be acceptable if integral with the principal exterior work. Examples of eligible improvements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Removal of incompatible façades and appurtenances;
- Restoration of historic façade materials;

- Restoration of an historic building in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation;
- Painting;
- Tuckpointing;
- Repair or replacement of exterior windows and doors, including storm doors and windows;
- Repair or replacement of appurtenances such as railings, stairs;
- Installation of handicap accessible entrances;
- Building cleaning using approved preservation-based methods;
- Landscaping (Gateways only).

Repairs or improvements that do not improve the appearance of a building will not be eligible. Examples of such improvements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Signs and Awning coverings;
- Roof sealing;
- Re-glazing;
- Demolition, except for the removal of architecturally incompatible facades or appurtenances;
- Incidental fees including architectural expenses, permit fees, and material testing costs;
- Most weatherization improvements.

Architectural Review Committee: A five-member committee appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the City Council shall be responsible for determining the eligibility of projects and for making funding recommendations. Such recommendations shall follow the preparation of a staff on each potential project. The members of the committee shall include the following:

- One member of the Discover Sycamore Group;
- One member of the Sycamore Economic Development Commission;
- One Council member;
- An architect or design professional;
- One at-large member.

Each member shall be a full-time resident of the City of Sycamore. An exception may be made in the case of the architect or design professional if no local professionals are available to serve. Members shall serve a two-year term and shall not succeed themselves, but may serve multiple, non-consecutive terms. Three of the initial five members shall serve only one-year terms. The committee shall appoint a chair at the first regular meeting after May 1 of each calendar year.

After its review of a project, the committee shall report its findings and make a recommendation to the City Manager for City Council action at a regular City Council

meeting, no less than seven days or more than twenty-one days following the committee's deliberations.

For More Information: Contact the Sycamore City Manager at (815) 895-4853.

**CITY OF SYCAMORE
DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
FY2017-18 AGREEMENT**

- 1. Initial Consultation.** Interested parties should contact the City Manager or the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce for program details.
- 2. Application Form.** An application packet will be available in the City Manager's Office at the Sycamore Center, 308 West State Street, or the office of the Sycamore Chamber at 407 W. State Street, Sycamore, Illinois, 60178.
- 3. Narrative Description.** The application form contains a section in which the applicant shall state the clear and concise objectives of the grant support.
- 4. Drawings.** In order for the Review Committee and the City Council to get a clear visual representation of the proposed project, drawings approximately to scale are required.
- 5. Photographs.** Photographs or digital images are not required but would afford the Committee and the Council another representative view of the building in its "as is" condition. Upon the completion of the project, photos of the finished improvements will be required.
- 6. Contractor Estimates and Invoices.** Written estimates from contractors must be provided unless the property owner or business owner, with the property owner's consent, elect to make the improvements. All local codes respecting licensed work will apply.
- 7. Copies.** At least six complete sets of the application and supporting documents are required prior to processing.
- 8. Review of Applications.** All applications must be submitted to the office of the City Manager. If the application is in order, the City Manager will call a meeting of the Review Committee. The meetings of the Committee shall be open to the general public. The applicants shall be separately informed of the meeting date, time, and place.
- 9. City Council Award.** Following Committee action, each grant application shall be placed on the next available Council agenda.
- 10. Funding of Awards.** Applications shall be considered on a competitive basis and are subject to funding limitations. In any given fiscal year, the amount awarded may be reduced below the amount requested, and some meritorious applications may not get funded.
- 11. Commencement of Work.** After the Council's award and the completion of all necessary documents, work may commence. Where permits are required, no work may commence without the approval of the Director of Building and Engineering.
- 12. Completion of Work.** All improvements shall be installed in a timely and workmanlike manner no more than six months from the date of the Finance Agreement unless alternative arrangements are made.
- 13. Protection of Work.** The building owner shall agree to maintain such improvements for a period of five years from the date of reimbursement by the City. Only minor

changes shall be allowed, such as painting or changing signs (if the nature of the business changes).

14. Changes or Alterations. Minor changes occurring during the construction process may be approved by the Director of Building and Engineering. Major changes must be considered by the Architectural Review Committee and approved by the City Council.

15. Prevailing Wages. Contractors performing work that may be reimbursed with City funds must pay prevailing wages. The Sycamore City Clerk has the most current copy of the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act provisions and wage rates by classification.

16. Taxability of Grant Funds. Local grants are ordinarily taxable for federal income purposes unless it can be determined that they are excludable. The City of Sycamore may issue a 1099-G form to the grantee. To determine a grantee's tax status, a completed IRS form W-9 will be required from the grantee prior to payment of the grant. Please consult a tax professional for any tax advice.

I have reviewed the requirements for the City of Sycamore Downtown Improvement Program and agree to comply with the provisions stated herein. I understand that failure to meet the requirements can result in the project becoming ineligible for reimbursement or require grant funds to be repaid.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____