

# 2021 Building Improvement Grant



The Building Improvement Grant (BIG) is designed to incentivize property owners to undertake exterior property improvements which will lead to a better utilization of properties within Downtown Fond du Lac. The intent is to support building projects that will help move the needle forward to a more aesthetically vibrant downtown.

The BIG is a competitive grant program. Applications will be scored and awarded based on identified metrics. The DFP Board of Directors has an obligation to the 214 property owners to invest in good, stable and financially feasible projects with an end goal of raising the property values of the entire district.

## Award Criteria:

Grants will be awarded to projects based on the impact the project will have on the overall downtown district. A variety of factors are considered in determining grant awards including, but not limited to: projected increase in property value, blight elimination, street front visibility, business track record, impact on surrounding neighborhood, a signed lease from a viable tenant, job creation, readiness to proceed, local economic impact, and new use of a high profile property.

## Program Details:

Property owners may apply for up to 50% of total project cost (exterior renovations only). For example, if your total project cost is \$20,000, you may apply for a grant of \$10,000.

Applications will be reviewed on the third Monday of each month beginning in February 2021. Applications are due the second Monday of each month to allow time for staff review. Applications will be accepted until all funding is exhausted for the year. Ideally, all funds would be granted in spring/summer to allow adequate time to complete projects before the end of the fiscal year.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, there have been cases where a property owner determines their project will not be completed or timelines have not been met. In these cases, funds will be reallocated back into the grant pool to be awarded to another property owner.

## Eligibility:

- ⇒ Property must be located within the Downtown Fond du Lac Business Improvement District. (see enclosed map)
- ⇒ The applicant must own or have plans to purchase the real estate. If the applicant is a business owner leasing a property, the property owner must provide written support of the project.
- ⇒ All exterior property improvements must have prior approval from the City of Fond du Lac. **All** projects applying for BIG funding require Downtown Architectural Review Board (DARB) approval. DARB meets the first Tuesday of each month and applications are due 10 days prior to the meeting date. Properties that are locally designated as historical properties may require approval from the Historic Preservation Commission. Questions regarding DARB, application submittals or historic status may contact the City of Fond du Lac Community Development Department at 920-322-3440.
- ⇒ No application will be reviewed or presented to the committee for consideration on behalf of an individual or entity that is delinquent in property taxes or any payments to the City of Fond du Lac or the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership.
- ⇒ Projects cannot be started prior to grant approval.

## Use of Funds:

- ⇒ Funds are to be used for labor or materials associated with exterior renovations. Examples include: carpentry, masonry, windows, doors, lighting, paint, signs, awnings, roofing (if visible from street level).
- ⇒ Grants funds are only applicable for permanent building structural improvements. Sheds, patios, trash enclosures and parking lots are examples of property enhancements that would not be covered.
- ⇒ All work must be completed by professional licensed contractors.

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## **Matching Investment:**

- ⇒ The property owner's matching investment must be equal to or greater than the amount being requested on the grant application.
- ⇒ The matching investment may not include costs incurred prior to finalization of a signed grant contract.

## **Project Start Up:**

Ideally, projects should be completed within a six-month window. However, project completion dates will be determined on a case-by-case basis on larger scale projects.

Any alterations or changes to the design approval by the Downtown Architectural Review Board may require re-submittal to DARB. Applicants should contact the City of Fond du Lac Community Development Department at 920-322-3440 to determine the level of review required for any proposed changes. If design alterations or changes are made without prior notification and approval, a stop work order may be issued until the issue is resolved.

## **Project Progress:**

Applicants may be required to provide periodic updates to DARB on their projects.

## **Reimbursement Process:**

The grantee will be reimbursed for eligible pre-approved grant-related expenses. Grant funds cannot be disbursed until all conditions have been met. These conditions include:

- ⇒ All conditions of the grant contract have been fulfilled.
- ⇒ The entire project has obtained the necessary permits from the City and all required inspections have been approved.
- ⇒ The entire project complies with all conditions of approval by the Downtown Architectural Review Board. All contractors have been paid in full.
- ⇒ Failure to comply with any of these conditions shall result in non-payment of grant funds to the applicant and project.

## **Contingency:**

All projects will be required to post a sign in a visible location stating "This project was funded in part by the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership." Upon payment, the DFP will write a press release and submit a picture to local media. Project success stories must be available to the DFP to further promote the various grant programs.

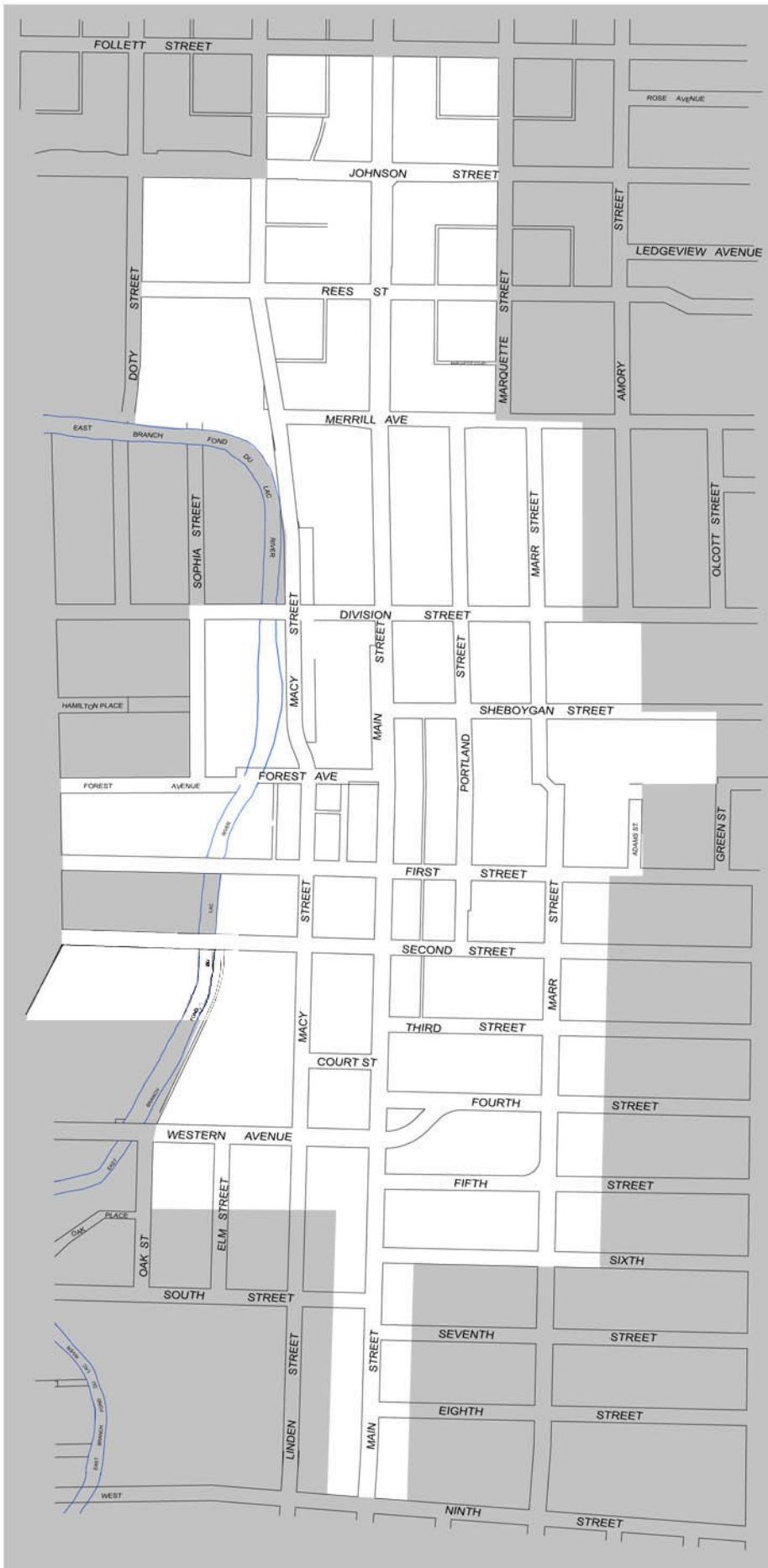
## **Approval Process:**

1. **DFP Staff Review:** Applications are reviewed by staff for completeness and accuracy. Applicants will be notified whether their application is complete or if additional information or corrections are necessary.
2. **Grant Review Committee:** The committee reviews applications on the third Monday of each month until funds are exhausted for the year. Applicants must be present at the meeting to answer questions. The Grant Review Committee is comprised of professionals in applicable fields including: economic development, real estate, finance, and property appraisals. Recommendations made by this committee serve as the basis for funding approvals.
3. **DFP Board Approval:** Upon recommendation by the Grant Review Committee, the DFP Board of Directors will review and approve each individual grant.
4. **Notification:** All applicants will be notified in writing of the DFP's decision. An agreement form must be signed and submitted to DFP staff before the start of the project.

**White Area:**

**Downtown Business Improvement District**

Properties within this area are eligible for the Building Improvement Grant.



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Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner/Owners: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Exterior Project Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Grant Amount Requested (cannot exceed 50%): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of design approval from the City of Fond du Lac: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired timeline for the start and completion of your project: \_\_\_\_\_

Written description of project: \_\_\_\_\_

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Applications will not be reviewed until all paperwork is received. All paperwork must be received one week prior to the grant review meeting.

## Required Attachments:

1. Photos of existing conditions
2. Architectural drawings or rendering of proposed project
3. Copies of estimates, bids, contracts, or quotations to be done in connection with the project
4. Written letter of support from property owner (if not the applicant)

## Large Scale Projects Only (greater than \$5,000 of grant funding being requested):

5. A list of real estate owned by the principals
6. A Sources and Uses of Funds Statement, including proof of matching funds.
7. A written statement describing the alternative plan in the event grant funds are not awarded

Please contact Amy Hansen, Executive Director, at 920-322-2007 with any questions. It is preferable to email the application and attachments to amy@downtownfdl.com. Alternatively, applications can be mailed to the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, 131 S. Main Street Suite 101, Fond du Lac, WI 54935.