

Village of Little Chute Business Improvement/ Façade Renovation Program



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VILLAGE OF LITTLE CHUTE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT/FAÇADE RENOVATION PROGRAM

I. Program Summary

The Little Chute Village Board has adopted a Design Manual primarily applicable within the Central Business District to create and retain the vision of a heritage destination in downtown Little Chute with an Old World European character. The purpose of the manual's requirements is to preserve, create, and promote the unique charm, atmosphere, and historical aspects of the community. Attractive building facades support and encourage local business and can have a significant effect on the attractiveness and marketability of a commercial district and the surrounding area.

To encourage business owners to reinvest in downtown Little Chute and other commercial areas within the Village and to financially assist with implementing the requirements of the Little Chute Design Manual, the Village of Little Chute has created a Business Improvement/Façade Renovation Financial Assistance Program to assist in the exterior renovations of these otherwise sound and vital properties within the Village. ***The Village encourages applicants for this program to obtain price quotes from Little Chute businesses and to undertake their proposed improvements utilizing Little Chute contractors whenever possible.***

II. Program Goals and Objectives

The Little Chute Business Improvement/Façade Renovation Program has the following goals and objectives:

1. To renovate existing commercial properties and structures in accordance with an Old World European theme to harmonize with the authentic Dutch Windmill Project in the downtown and to reflect the Dutch heritage of the Village;
2. To attract new businesses and to retain existing businesses currently located in the Village;
3. To retain existing jobs and bring additional employment opportunities into the Village;
4. To provide an incentive and financial assistance to business and property owners to improve their building facades and signage in accordance with an Old World European design theme;

5. To help make the Village of Little Chute a tourist destination by exhibiting the appearance of a Village that cares about its built environment, the residents who live in the Village and the visitors who travel to and through the Village.

6. To encourage the maintenance, expansion and improvement of the Village's Central Business District and improve the viability of the downtown and other commercial areas as important commercial districts in the Village of Little Chute and Fox Valley region.

III. Applicant and Property Eligibility Requirements

Property owners of service or commercial/mixed use structures and building tenants, with leases of more than one year in length located in the areas within the Village of Little Chute that are zoned Central Business District, Commercial Shopping District and Commercial Highway District are eligible to apply for this financial assistance program. Before the Village will approve financial assistance for a building tenant, the tenant must obtain written approval of their project from the property owner.

In order to qualify for Village financial assistance, applicants cannot start on their project until after receiving the necessary Village approvals. If any work is started on a project before application and approval by the Village, the Village will not provide financial assistance for the project.

IV. Eligible Costs and Activities

Financial assistance is available to the above noted eligible applicants and properties within the financial limitations established by the Little Chute Village Board and based on the parameters outlined in this program document for the following activities and associated costs:

1. Restoring or substantially beautifying, or enhancing the entire or partial façades or elevations of an eligible building that is visible to the public from the public street right-of-way or from a public parking lot adjoining the building. Funding for improvement of the rear facades of buildings will only be allowed if the entire building envelope is being addressed for improvement or if the rear façade is a second phase for a building that has already had its street façade improved in conformance with the Little Chute Design Manual. Eligible items include uncovering and restoring historical facades, removing existing façade materials and replacing them with a new design and materials, and other detailing which leads to a substantially enhanced appearance in conformance with the Little Chute Design Manual. Although not eligible for individual funding, the following may be funded as part of a more comprehensive façade improvement: windows, doors, exterior cleaning, tuck pointing, painting,

exterior lighting, shutters, gutters, awnings, and historical architectural elements.

2. Design and/or architectural fees and permit fees up to a maximum of **\$2500.00 of the total Village loan** per project associated with the proposed renovation. These fees will only be eligible to be covered if the building renovation project is undertaken and completed.

3. Landscaping, pedestrian improvements, signage and exterior improvements related to addressing ADA issues may be included in a project application if they are directly related to a larger façade improvement project.

4. Roof repair or replacement of a roof structure only where a new roof style is a critical component associated with a major architectural change in building design and facades that requires the installation of a totally new and different roof structure.

V. Ineligible Costs and Activities

The following activities and improvements are not eligible to receive financial assistance from the Business Improvement/Façade Renovation Program:

1. Any expense incurred prior to written notification from the Village of Little Chute of approval of financial assistance for the project.

2. The cost of construction where the majority of the project is new construction unless the new construction involves the replacement or reconstruction of an existing building and funding shall not exceed \$30,000.

3. Work that principally involves minor repairs, painting or maintenance, billboards, landscaping or paving of patio or parking areas.

4. Re-roofing, repair or replacement of a roof unless it is associated with a major architectural change to the building design and facades that requires the installation of a totally new and different roof structure.

5. Internal renovations or improvements to buildings. The Village of Little Chute has a Revolving Loan Program and Small Business Micro Loan Program to assist with interior improvements to buildings.

6. Expenditures incurred with regard to acquiring business related inventory.

7. Working capital.

8. Property acquisition.

9. Work on buildings or businesses owned and/or operated by a non-profit entity.

10. Building or property used for residential purposes unless 50% or more of the buildings area is used for commercial purposes.

11. Any project determined that is not in compliance with the Village's Zoning Ordinance, Building Codes or the adopted Little Chute Design Manual.

VI. Overview and Terms of Sign Grant Program

As part of the 2018-2022 Downtown Master Plan, a Sign Grant program was identified as a way to incentivize businesses to upgrade signage while providing an incentive to the adherence of the Design Review Manual.

The guidelines for the program are as follows:

1. At this time, eligibility for the Sign Grant Program is limited to businesses located within the Central Business District (Downtown)
2. The program would be eligible for properties or business owners updating an existing non-conforming sign or for a new sign that currently does not exist.
3. The financial parameters of the program allow for grants from \$300 to \$1000, but not pay more than 50% of any upgrade or new sign.
4. The proposed sign is required to be approved by the Design Review Board, adhering to all matters related to allowed or preferred designs.
5. The program allows for a maximum of 5 sign grants awarded per calendar year, available on a first come, first served basis per calendar year.
6. The grant would not have to be paid back and would be provided in the way of a reimbursement, distributed after the sign was fully installed to design standards.
7. Eligible activities include the removal of appropriate signage and awnings, design, purchase and installation of new signage.

VII. Financial Assistance and Terms of the Program

1. The Village of Little Chute has established an initial fund of \$150,000 to support the Business Improvement/Façade Renovation Program.
2. The Program will be operated as a **No (0%) Interest** long term **matching loan** that will not have to be repaid to the Village before the property is sold and/or changes ownership.
3. The amount of the loan will be established as a two to one match (2 dollars of Village resources to 1 dollar of private investment) to the amount of funds the owner/applicant is investing in the project on a cash basis which shall be

documented through reports submitted to the Village following completion of the work. The Village will provide the loan proceeds as a reimbursement following completion of the work that was previously approved for funding by the Village and the filing of the required paperwork. Reimbursement will occur within 15 business days following submission of the required documentation to the Village by the owner/applicant.

4. The minimum amount of any loan approved under this program shall be \$1500. The **maximum amount** of any loan approved under this program shall be \$40 per square foot of the proposed façade refurbishment. .

5. Projects approved for loan funds shall be **started within 45 calendar days of approval** and shall be **completed within 6 months of the loan approval**. Extensions to the completion date may be granted by the Village for unforeseen circumstances such as inclement weather or the delayed delivery of special building materials being used on a project. The applicant must request any extension in writing documenting the reasons for the request. The Village will notify the applicant of its approval or denial of the extension request.

6. Loan/project applications will be processed on a first come, first eligible basis as funding under this program is limited.

7. Village participation in this loan program may be limited or capped based on the availability of program funds such that the above participation with matching loan funds may not be possible.

VIII. Application Process

Step 1: Application for financial assistance is submitted to the Village Administrator on the appropriate Village forms. An application from a tenant must include a copy of the building lease and written approval of the project by the building owner. Applications must include color photographs of the facades to be improved, a copy of the proposed façade renovation plans that have been approved by the Little Chute Design Review Board, and a copy of the cost estimates to complete all of the work that the applicant is requesting financial assistance with from the Village.

Step 2: The Village Administrator will work with the applicant to insure that all of the required application materials are complete. Upon determination of completeness the Village Administrator will prepare a recommendation on the application and schedule Review and Approval of the Financial Assistance Request for Village Board action.

Step 3: The applicant must sign a Financial Assistance/Loan Agreement with the Village and any other required paperwork including Lien papers against the property for the amount of the Village's loan for the project.

Step 4: The applicant must obtain all required State and Village permits for the required work prior to starting construction. In addition the applicant must display a sign provided by the Village on the site or building indicating that **“Financing is being provided for the project in part by the Village of Little Chute Business Improvement/Façade Renovation Program”**.

Step 5: The applicant pays for the completed construction work and submits their payment reimbursement request to the Village Administrator on the appropriate Village forms along with paid receipts and lien waivers from all contractors.

Step 6: A final inspection of the building project by the Village Administrator and Community Development staff shall be scheduled to determine that all of the required construction work is completed in accordance with the approved plans and application. Upon determination that the project meets all of the requirements of the program the Village Administrator shall authorize payment to the applicant for the approved amount of the financial assistance that was awarded to the applicant.

Adopted by the Village Board on November 11th, 2009

Amended by the Village Board on January 17th, 2018

Amended by the Village Board on April 4th, 2018