

A Summary of the Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project

Introduction

The Town of Appomattox utilized a 2016 Planning Grant to research, plan, assemble, and submit a 2017 Competitive Improvement Grant (CIG) application through the Virginia Community Development Block Grant Program (VCDBG). The Region 2000 Planning District Commission took the lead in preparing the CIG grant application and Community Planning Partners (now a part of Summit Design and Engineering Services) took the lead in preparing an Economic Restructuring Plan. Ultimately this 2017 CIG submission was not successful.

In early 2018, Gary Shanaberger, the new Town Manager for the Town of Appomattox, consulted with staff of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) regarding the failed application. Upon receiving positive feedback from VDHCD staff, Mr. Shanaberger subsequently consulted with the Town Council regarding resubmitting a 2018 CIG application for the Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project. Because one of the failings of the previous grant application was insufficient commitments by downtown property owners to participate in a Façade Improvement Program, the Town Council indicated that it would support moving forward with a resubmission of the grant if on the front end of the process, enough property owners would commit to participating in the Façade Improvement Program. Mr. Shanaberger accepted this challenge and was very successful in garnering the support that Council required. Subsequently, Town Council procured as a small purchase the services of Summit Design and Engineering Services to assist with assembling the new CIG grant application. Mr. Craig Wilson, Principal Planner for Summit working out of the firm's Richmond office, took the lead on the work.

Throughout the fall of 2018 and winter of 2019, a Project Management Team worked with Mr. Shanaberger and Mr. Wilson to assemble the new VCDBG-funded Community Improvement Grant application that is summarized by this document. The maximum grant amount for a single activity Downtown Revitalization Project, that activity being blight elimination as an economic development project, is \$700,000. The deadline for the CIG application is Friday, March 29.

The following summarizes the main components of the Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project:

Façade Improvement Program

The Façade Improvement Program is intended to help downtown property owners do repairs to the exteriors of their buildings to create a more attractive downtown for both residents and visitors. As of the writing of this summary, 21 property owners who own 28 primary and ancillary commercial buildings of the 37 commercial buildings in the Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project Area have made commitments to participate in the program.

The project budget sets aside \$350,000 for Façade Improvements and \$35,000 for design assistance. The Town of Appomattox Economic Development Authority has agreed to provide \$100,000 to assist property owners with meeting the match requirement outlined below under guideline #6 in amounts up to \$5,000 per building.

The Façade Improvement Program will operate under the following guidelines:

1. Façade Improvement Program funds are for exterior improvements to storefronts or primary facades and side and rear façade improvements if the side or rear is visible from a publicright-of-way.

2. Eligible improvement activities include:
 - Exterior repairs (masonry, soffits, windows, doors, etc.)
 - Cleaning and painting
 - Awnings, signage, lighting, planters
3. The primary façade has to be prioritized and is eligible for up to \$15,000 in assistance, with a second business bay on the primary façade eligible for an additional \$5,000 in improvements, and side and rear facades eligible for an additional \$5,000 in improvements. The maximum amount per separately parceled building is \$20,000.
4. Façade Improvement Program funds are also available to pay for architectural design assistance up to 10% of the cost of the proposed façade improvements at no cost to the property owner.
5. Funds are provided as a 5-year, 0% interest, deferred loan, forgiven at a rate of 20% each year during the term, secured by a deed of trust that stipulates that the improvements will be kept in place and the building will be occupied by a retail/commercial business, except for occasional and short vacancies. If preferred by the property owner, an easement can be used to secure the improvements with the same stipulations and time-period.
6. Requires a one to one property owner match:
 - Via a direct cash match for the proposed Façade Improvements;
 - The documented cost of any permanent interior or exterior property improvements within the past two years (does not include acquisition, moveable equipment, inventory, or operating costs);
 - Or some combination of the two.



**Example of a Façade Improvement
from a Preliminary Work Write-Up for Mama Terezinha's Pizzeria**

Streetscape & Parking Improvements

The public improvements that will be implemented as a part of the Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project include:

1. The installation of new decorative streetlights to match those that are currently along Main Street:
 - a. On Church Street from Harrell Street to Atwood Street.
 - b. On Main Street from Lee Street to Court Street.
 - c. On Harrell Street from Church Street to Lee Street.
2. Removing a section of the handrail and reconstruction of the sidewalk at the northeast corner of the intersection of Church Street and Harrell Street.
3. The installation of a crosswalk and pedestrian-activated warning signs across Church Street at the intersection of Main Street and Church Street.
4. The installation of two downtown gateway signs at the intersection of Church Street and Atwood Street and Main Street and Court Street.
5. The development of a small 8 to 10-space parking lot on the vacant parcel southeast of the intersection of Church Street and Harrell Street.

These improvements are shown on the conceptual streetscape design that follows this page. The total cost for all public improvements including engineering and inspections is anticipated to be \$217,771.

Branding & Marketing

A portion of a Community Improvement Grant for Downtown Revitalization can be utilized for branding and marketing. The Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project budget sets aside \$30,000 to procure the services of a branding/marketing firm to develop a new brand, logo, and marketing plan.

Match/Leverage Funding

The Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project includes \$43,071 in Town funds to assist with administrative costs, to provide a portion of the purchase price for the vacant parcel that will be used for the new parking lot, and to cover 50% of the cost of constructing the new parking lot. Because Courtland Field was constructed within the last two years and is included in the Project Area, the Town can count the expenditures for that park as leverage toward the CIG grant. The total cost for the Courtland Field project was \$740,218 including Town and County of Appomattox funding, land donation, and in-kind services and private donations. Sources and expenditures for the Appomattox Downtown Revitalization Project can be broken down as follows:

Funding Sources

Community Improvement Grant	\$700,000
Town of Appomattox	\$43,071
Town of Appomattox EDA	\$100,000
Private Façade Matches	\$250,000
Courtland Field	\$740,218
Total	\$1,833,289

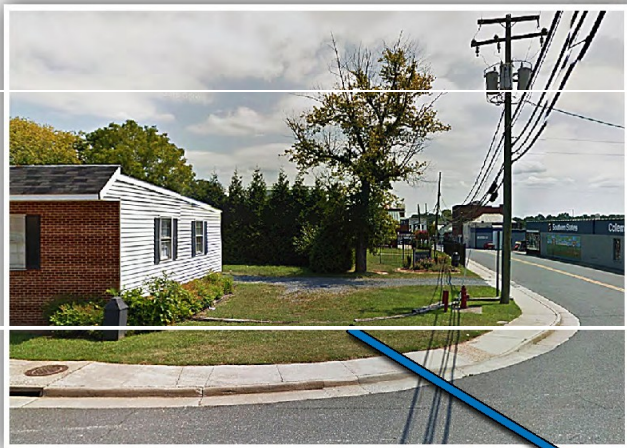
Expenditures

Administration	\$75,300
Acquisition	\$35,000
Streetscape Improvements	\$164,013
Façade Improvements	\$735,000
Courtland Field	\$740,218
Parking Lot Construction	\$43,042
Branding & Signage	\$40,716

Total **\$1,833,289**



(INSTALL NEW DOWNTOWN GATEWAY SIGN AT CORNER OF COURT AND MAIN)



DOWNTOWN GATEWAY SIGN

