

Downtown & Gateway Improvement Program



The City of Sycamore aims to create and sustain the vibrant and welcoming appearance of its downtown business district and gateway areas, including the preservation of its historic architecture and charm. The Downtown & Gateway Improvement Program is a matching grant program administered by the City of Sycamore to encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of the exterior of buildings in these areas.

Location Parameters Eligible projects must be located within the [Central Business District](#) as defined by the Unified Development Ordinance (Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1.G.), or [gateway areas](#) as defined by commercial properties fronting IL Route 64 from Airport Road to Peace Road and along Route 23 from IL Route 64 to the Kishwaukee River.

Applicants Eligible applicants may consist of either a commercial property owner or a commercial tenant. Commercial tenant applicants must first obtain written consent from their property owner to pursue project funding. In the case of a building owner with multiple tenants or storefronts, a determination as to the eligibility of any or all tenancies will be made based upon the merits of the proposal (i.e., corner building or multiple distinct façades).

General Restrictions Projects consisting largely of new construction and business expansion are not eligible. Gateway projects are limited to commercial properties only; residential rental properties are ineligible. No work can begin on a proposed project until grant funding has been approved for said project by the City Council. Work performed prior to City Council approval will not be eligible, and funding will not be awarded retroactively to projects that have already been completed.

Available Funding Approved projects are eligible for a dollar-for-dollar matching grant of up to \$5,000. Funds are awarded in the form of a check to the grantee after the approved project has been completed. Funding is limited to one project per applicant in a three-year period. Funding availability is dependent on the City Council's annual authorization of capital spending for this program. Due to limited funding, projects will be considered on a competitive basis and may receive partial funding in order to maximize the overall impact of the grant funds.

Application Period **April 1, 2024, through May 31, 2024**

Project submissions 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 remains available.

Please review the Program Agreement document carefully and submit all requested materials in their entirety. Unsigned or otherwise incomplete applications will not be considered.



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Project Eligibility Guidelines

The general goal of this program is to create a unifying and welcoming appearance within the downtown and gateway areas without erasing diversity in architectural style. It is neither expected nor desired that buildings will be made to look the same; rather, the program aims for a harmonious relationship in terms of building proportion, materials, color, and architectural heritage.

All projects must generally achieve at least one of two 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 walkways generally used by the public will be considered, although related interior finish work may be eligible if it is 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 a historic building in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation;
- Painting and tuckpointing;
- Repair or replacement of exterior windows and doors;
- Repair or replacement of appurtenances (i.e., railings or stairs);
- Installation of handicap-accessible entrances;
- Exterior building cleaning using approved preservation-based methods;
- Landscaping (gateway projects only).

The following repairs or improvements are not eligible:

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

Next Steps

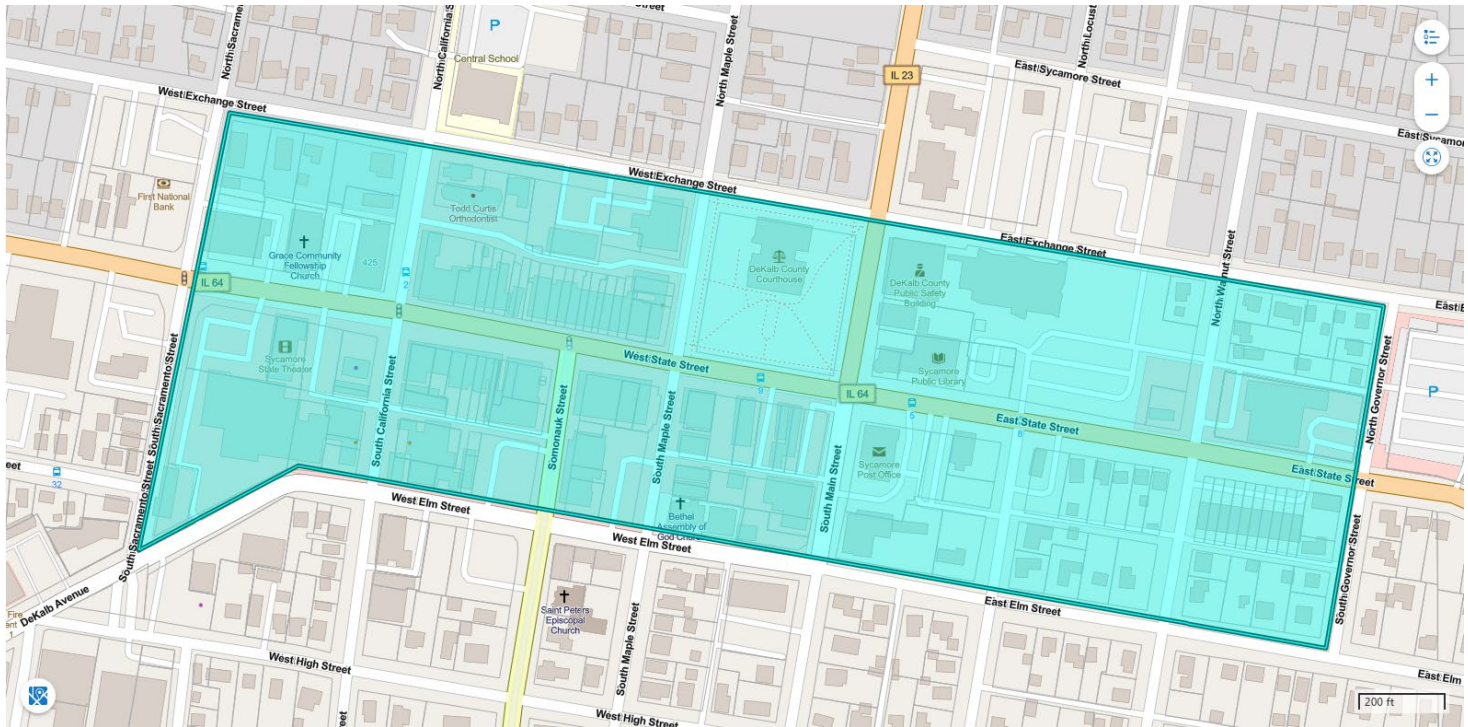
Submitted projects deemed eligible will be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next available City Council meeting (1st and 3rd Mondays of every month). The City will contact applicants to notify of a favorable or unfavorable vote within (2) business days.

Program Contact Jessica Lingle / (815) 895-6746 / jlingle@cityofsycamore.com

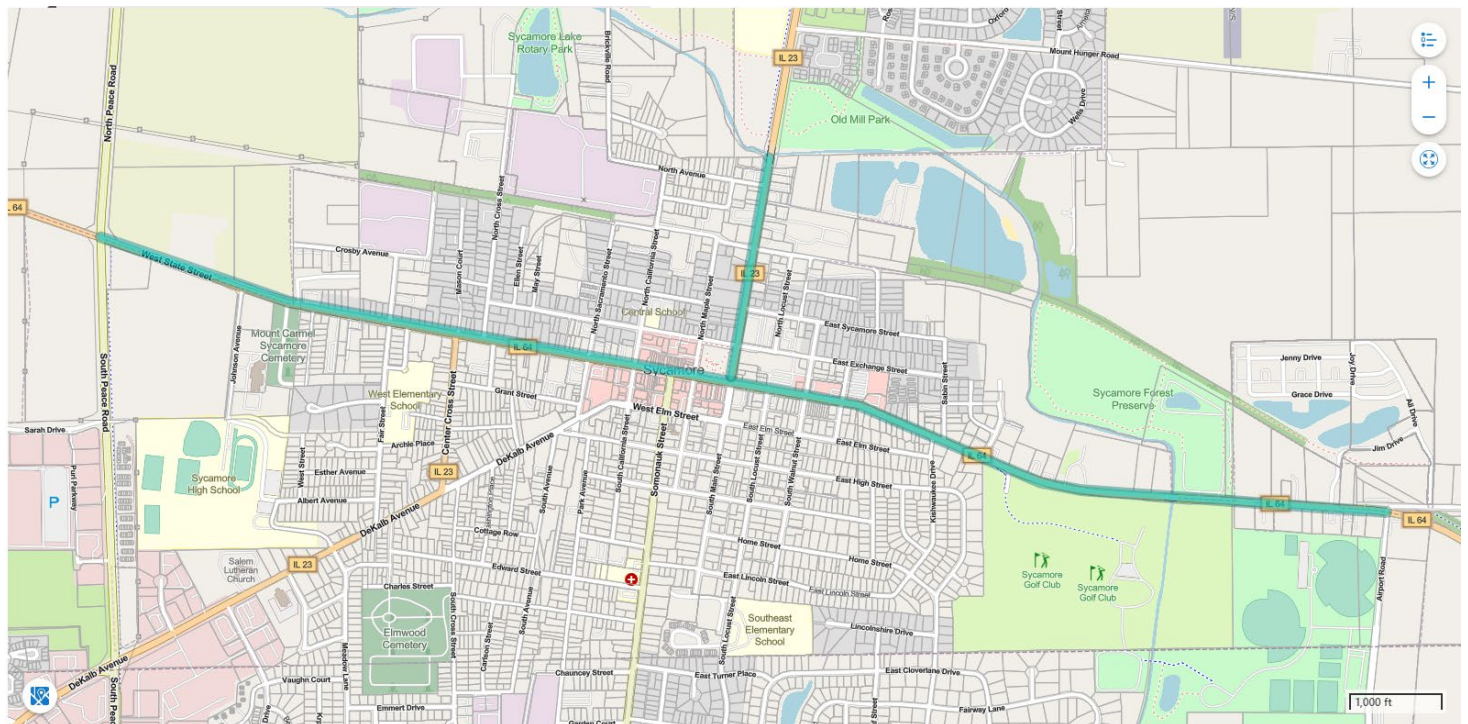
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Eligible Central Business District Properties



Eligible Gateway Properties





AGREEMENT

1. **Application Form.** An application form is included in this packet and must be completed in its entirety.
2. **Narrative Description.** The application form contains a section in which the applicant shall state the clear and concise objectives of the requested grant support.
3. **Drawings.** For the City Council to get a clear visual representation of the proposed project, drawings approximately to scale are required.
4. **Photographs.** Photographs or digital images are not required but would afford the Council a representation of the building in its "as is" condition. Upon the completion of the project, photos of the finished improvements are required.
5. **Contractor Estimates and Invoices.** Written estimates from contractors must be provided unless the property owner or tenant, with the property owner's consent, elect to make the improvements. All licensed work must abide by all local codes.
6. **Copies.** Two complete sets of the application and supporting documents are required prior to processing. A digital copy is welcome but cannot be in lieu of the two hard copies.
7. **Review of Applications.** Applications may be mailed or dropped off directly to City Hall, located at 308 W State Street, Sycamore, Illinois, 60178. Proposals that meet eligibility requirements will be scheduled for consideration at the next available meeting of the City Council. Applicants will be notified of the scheduled date and are encouraged to attend.
8. **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. Grant funds are awarded in the form of a check to the grantee after the approved project has been completed.
9. **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 Community Development.
10. **Completion of Work.** All improvements shall be made in a timely manner of no more than six months from the date of approval, unless in exigent circumstances in which the City is duly notified.
11. **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).
12. **Changes or Alterations.** Minor changes occurring during the construction process may be approved by the Director of Community Development. Major changes must be reconsidered by the City Council.
13. **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.
14. **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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have reviewed the requirements for the City of Sycamore Downtown & Gateway Improvement Program and agree to comply with the provisions stated herein. I understand that failure to meet the requirements may deem a project ineligible for reimbursement or require grant funds to be repaid.

Applicant Name (Printed): _____ Date: _____

Applicant Signature: _____

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APPLICATION

Date of Submission _____

Applicant Full Name _____

Applicant Home Address _____

Applicant Phone _____

Applicant Email Address _____

Project Address _____

Project Tenant (if any) _____

Tenant Phone _____

Contractor Name(s) _____

Contractor Address(es) _____

Contractor Phone(s) _____

Project Narrative

Please clearly and concisely describe the project in the space below.

Grant Amount Request (max \$5,000): _____

.....
(Office Use Only)

Application Received on: _____ City Council to Review on: _____

City Council Vote: APPROVED DECLINED

Grant Award Amount: _____