



2016 Downtown Accessibility Improvement Grant Program Guidelines and Application

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**CITY OF FREEPORT
2016 DOWNTOWN ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

This program is designed to provide financial incentives to facilitate the improvements increasing the accessibility of buildings located within the Downtown Tax Increment Redevelopment (TIF) Area. The grants are provided in recognition that the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) may present challenges with regard to compliance for many buildings located in Freeport’s downtown, and that financial assistance may help initiate improvements on behalf of building and business owners.

Description:

The City has allocated \$15,000 for Downtown Accessibility Improvement Grants for 2016. Funds not expended within the given calendar year may be carried over and available in future years.

The Downtown Accessibility Improvement Program is intended to assist with the costs of rehabilitating interior and exterior elements of buildings that increase overall accessibility and compliance with ADA regulations. Under the program, property owners or business owners within the Downtown TIF area are eligible to apply for **grants of up to 75 percent of the total cost of qualified interior and/or exterior rehabilitation, for grants up to \$7,500.00**. All grant awards are subject to funds being formally appropriated by the City Council.

There will be one application period in 2016.

Milestone	Deadline
Outreach to downtown property and business owners	August 16 – 31, 2016
Applicants prepare project plans/drawings/estimates and meet with City and RAMP representative on-site.	August 16 – September 12, 2016
Historic Preservation review applications due	September 12, 2016
Public notices for Historic Preservation Review in paper	September 15, 2016
Historic Preservation Review Hearings	September 30, 2016
Grant applications due	October 7, 2016
Grant application review committee meets	October 10 – 14, 2006
Grant recommendations to City Council	October 17, 2016

The City of Freeport Community Development Director, with the assistance of a committee comprised of an additional City representative, two representatives from RAMP of Stephenson County and a representative of the Stephenson County Advocates for Accessibility will recommend applications to the City Council. Grant program compliance and the reimbursement of funds are overseen by the City of Freeport Community Development Director.

Grant money will be payable as a reimbursement after the Completion Report/Request for Reimbursement form and supporting documentation are submitted to the City of Freeport’s

Community Development Department. Individual grant applications will be accepted for multiple buildings with the same owner. Multiple grants for phased rehabilitations will be considered and based on availability.

It is not the purpose of this program to finance ongoing improvements that may be considered part of a building's regular maintenance. Each eligible improvement will be funded by the program only once.

Target Area:

A map indicating the Historic Business and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts is presented as Appendix A. The building for which grant assistance is sought is required to be located inside the TIF area.

Eligible Properties and Uses of Funds:

An eligible applicant must be the owner of the building or a business owner who is a tenant of the building for which the rehabilitation is planned. Tenant applicants must provide written consent from the building owner for all proposed improvements and a copy of a lease with at least five (5) years remaining.

If more applications are received than current funding levels allow, the Mayor and/or his designee reserves the right to prioritize applications. Preference will be given to the following eligible rehabilitation activities for which funds may be used, in the following order:

- Providing access to a business from public sidewalks, parking areas, and public transportation
- Providing access to the goods and services offered by a business
- Providing access to public restrooms
- Removing barriers to other amenities offered to the public

Grant requests will be considered in the following weighted manner:

1. Within Historic Business District: Commercial Zoning: B-1-1 through B-3
2. Within Historic Business District: Manufacturing Zoning: M-1 through M-3
3. Within Downtown TIF District: Commercial Zoning: B-1-1 through B-3
4. Within Downtown TIF District: Manufacturing Zoning: M-1 through M-3

Costs associated with the above list of eligible rehabilitation activities also include:

- Soft costs such as design work, architectural, engineering, planning, and other professional fees
- Materials
- Contracted rehabilitation services (carpentry, plumbing, electrical, etc.)
- Waste disposal

Improvements Not Eligible for Grant Funds:

- Exterior and/or interior remodeling that is cosmetic in nature and does not improve accessibility
- Improvements completed or in progress prior to notification of grant approval
- Purchase of furnishings or equipment that do not become part of the real estate

Funding Requirements and Limitations:

- Submitted information and project bid estimates (at least two bids for all work shall be submitted to the City) will be reviewed by the Community Development Department. The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposed work that does not meet the program guidelines.
- Projects must be completed within one year of the issuance of a Letter of Commitment from the City Council. The City Council reserves the right to allow a reasonable extension of this time limit upon receiving a written request from the applicant.
- Labor or sweat equity performed by the owner, friends, relatives, etc. cannot be used as a portion of the cost incurred in the improvement project.
- Labor costs will be reimbursed only if performed by a licensed and insured contractor. Proof of liability insurance as per city code and proof of workers compensation insurance are required.
- Soft costs incurred within one year prior to the issuance of the Letter of Commitment that directly relate to the façade project are eligible for reimbursement under the terms of this grant. Prior soft costs must be included in the original grant application for approval. Rehabilitation work started before written approval of the grant application is obtained from the City Council is ineligible for reimbursement.
- Properties must be up-to-date on property taxes in order to be eligible for a Façade Improvement Grant.
- Properties must pass a health and safety code inspection by the City Building Inspector and Fire Inspector in order to qualify for a Grant.
- All work must comply with applicable local, Federal and State laws and regulations, including those pertaining to the payment of Prevailing Wages. Submittal of documentation of prevailing wage compliance shall be a requirement for any reimbursement under this grant program.

Application Process:

1. Applications for the Downtown Accessibility Improvement Grant Program may be obtained from the City of Freeport Community Development Office at 524 W. Stephenson St. and may be found online at www.cityoffreeport.org. Applications may also be obtained from RAMP at their office located at 2155 W Galena.
2. Prior to submitting a grant application, the applicant must schedule a joint interview with the Community Development Director and a representative of RAMP. It is recommended that this meeting occur before final plans, estimates, and bids are made in order to avoid unnecessary changes and delays in the final approval.
3. To be considered, the applicant must submit a completed Downtown Accessibility Improvement Grant Application to the City of Freeport. In addition to the application, a detailed description of the proposed work, projected completion date, copies of estimates and costs involved in the project are required. If the proposed project is a part of a more extensive rehabilitation, only project costs included in the grant scope need be itemized. Designs with dimensions of the completed project must also accompany the application. Professional designs are recommended, but not required. All designs must follow the guidelines set forth by the Community Development Department. Please see Appendix C for an abbreviated list of guidelines, and The City of Freeport's *Historic Preservation Design Guidelines* for the complete set of guidelines.
4. Receipt of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the City's Historic Preservation Commission is a prerequisite to application for a Downtown Accessibility Improvement Grant. COA applications are available from the City's Community Development Department. COA applicants must present their application at a public hearing held by the Historic Preservation Commission.
5. The property must pass a health and safety code inspection conducted by the City's Building Inspector and Fire Inspector.
6. Recommendations for grant awards will be considered by the City Council.
7. Any changes or amendments, if any, necessary for grant request consideration will be discussed with the applicant within seven (7) days after the Council decision.
8. In the case of changes, the applicant must submit a revised application for final review and recommendations to the Community Development Director for resubmittal to the City Council.
9. After the final submission of revisions, the application will be considered for approval or denial by the City Council. Results will be communicated in writing in the form of a Letter of Commitment or a Letter of Denial.
10. Recipients of any program funds must agree to observe all applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the use of grant funds.

11. Recipients agree to submit a project Completion Report/Request for Reimbursement form (Appendix D) to the City of Freeport Community Development Office, including copies of all building permits, bills and receipts prior to the release of any funds. In addition to the report, recipients must submit photographic or other evidence that the project for which the grant is awarded is 100 percent complete. A final on-site inspection of the completed project will be made by the City of Freeport to certify that the eligible work was completed in a workmanlike manner according to the information submitted in the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact the City of Freeport's Community Development Department to schedule progress inspections and final inspections for the project. Upon certification by a City official that all work has been satisfactorily completed, a reimbursement will be processed and issued.

- Copies of estimates and costs (include at least two cost estimates for each project element)
- Copy of lease agreement, if applicable

7. Statement of Understanding

The Applicant (undersigned) agrees to comply with the design guidelines and procedures of the City of Freeport Downtown Accessibility Improvement Program and the conceptual design and outline specifications as agreed to by the applicant and the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Applicant understands that the Applicant must submit a Project Completion Report/Request for Reimbursement form, along with cost documentation, copies of building permits, receipts, invoices, certified payrolls, and contractor’s final waivers of lien upon completion of the approved improvements.

Applicant’s Signature _____ Date _____

If the applicant is other than the owner, the following line must be completed:

I certify that I, the owner of the property at _____ do authorize the applicant to apply for reimbursement under the City of Freeport, Downtown Accessibility Improvement Program and undertake the approved improvements.

Owner’s Signature _____ Date _____

Owner’s Printed Name _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Case Number _____

Date application received: _____

Grant approved:

Date _____

Total estimated project cost _____

Percent applied for grant _____

Total amount of grant _____

Grant denied:

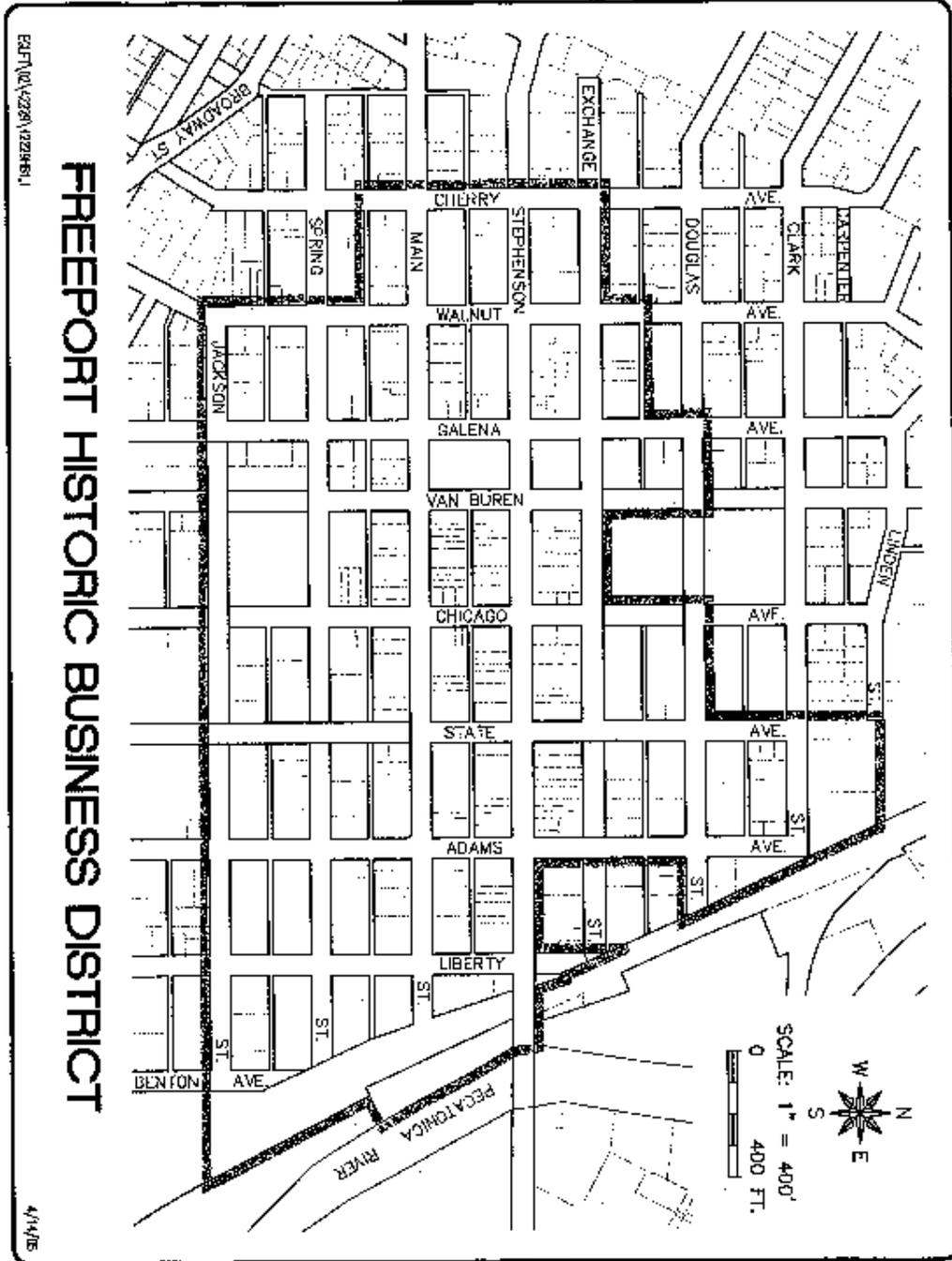
Date _____

Reason _____

APPENDIX A

FREEPORT DOWNTOWN HISTORIC BUSINESS AND TIF DISTRICT MAP

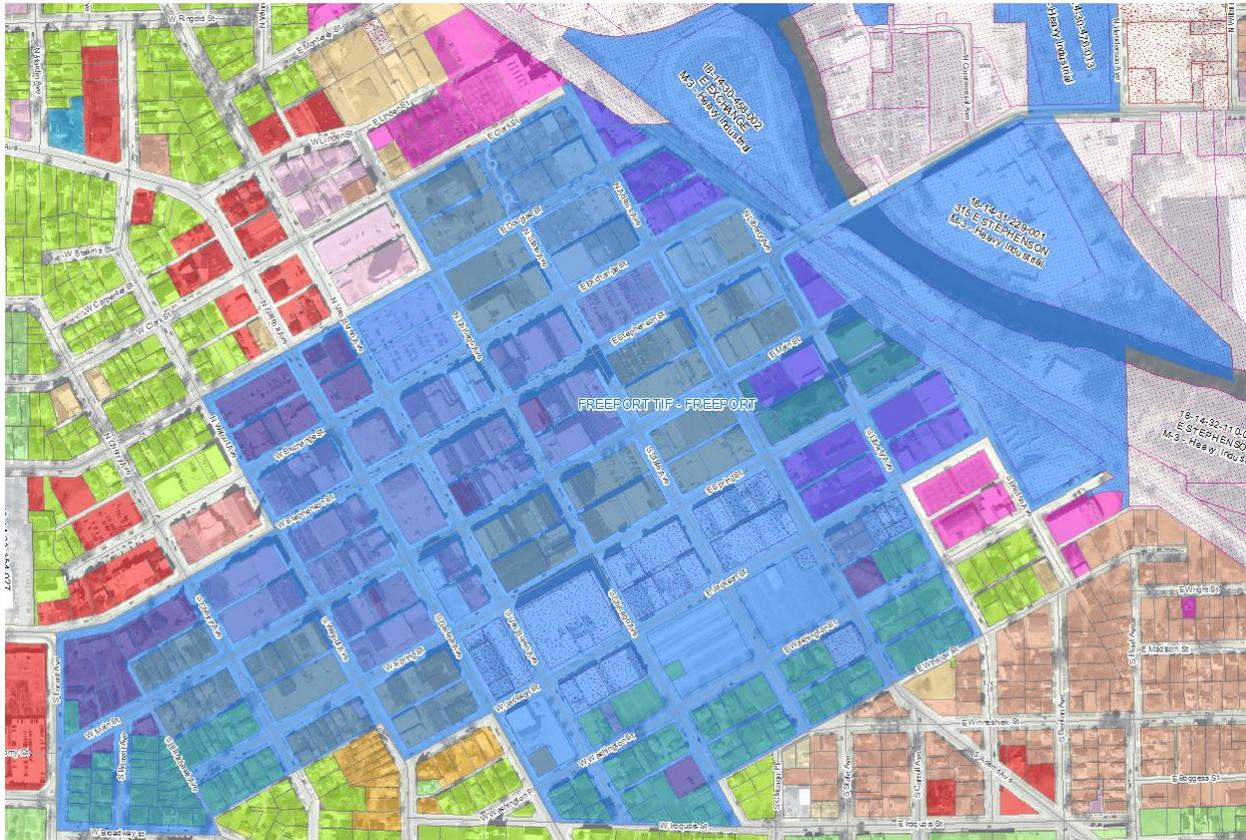
a. Historic Business District Map



APPENDIX A

FREEPORT DOWNTOWN HISTORIC BUSINESS AND TIF DISTRICT MAP

b. Downtown TIF District Map



APPENDIX B

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

(Applicable to properties identified as contributing to the Freeport Downtown Historic District)

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of the property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize the property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features of architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of the deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

APPENDIX C

CITY OF FREEPORT DOWNTOWN ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM DESIGN GUIDELINES

(All projects receiving funding from the City of Freeport are required to adhere to design guidelines. Designs will be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.)

1. Height – The height of any proposed alteration or construction should be compatible with the style and character of the structure and with surrounding structures in the historic district and directly adjacent to the district.
2. Proportions of Windows and Doors – The proportions and relationships between doors and windows should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the subject and with surrounding structures within the historic district and directly adjacent to the district.
3. Relationship of Building Masses and Spaces – The relationship of a structure within a historic to the open space between it and adjoining structures should be compatible.
4. Roof Shape – The design of the roof should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the structure and surrounding structures in the historic district and directly adjacent to the district.
5. Landscaping – Landscaping should be compatible with the architectural character and appearance of the structure and of surrounding structures and landscapes in the historic district and directly adjacent to the district.
6. Scale – The scale of the structure after alteration, construction, or partial demolition should be compatible with its architectural style and character and with surrounding structures in the historic district and directly adjacent to the district.
7. Directional Expression – Facades in the historic district and directly adjacent to the district should blend with other structures in regard to directional expression. Structures in the historic district should be compatible with the dominant horizontal or vertical expression of surrounding structures. The directional expression of the structure after alteration, construction, or partial demolition should be compatible with its original architectural style and character.
8. Architectural Details – Architectural details including materials, colors, and textures should be treated so as to make the structure compatible with its original architectural style and character and to preserve and enhance the architectural style or character of the structure and the historic district.

APPENDIX D

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT/REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT

(To be submitted after completion of the project)

Case Number _____

**CITY OF FREEPORT
DOWNTOWN ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT/REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT

This completion report, including copies of all building permits, bills, receipts, and cancelled checks, contractor’s final waivers of lien, prevailing wage documentation, and photographs associated with the restoration or historic rehabilitation project shall be submitted by the participant to the Community Development Director prior to the release of any funds. In addition, such report shall include evidence that such project has received a Final Inspection Certificate from the City’s Building Department to demonstrate that such project for which the grant was awarded is 100 percent complete. The Building Inspector shall make a final on-site inspection of such completed project prior to the release of any funds for such project.

Property Address: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant’s Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Participant’s Address: _____

Final Cost Breakdown (Attach addition sheets, if necessary)

Example: Painting, Masonry repointing, Carpentry, Design fees, etc.

Work Description	Contractor	Labor	Material	Cost

Total final project cost \$ _____

Amount of reimbursement \$ _____
(75% of project costs not to exceed \$7,500)

I/We hereby certify that the Final Cost Breakdown items have been completed at the indicated address and that they have been paid in full.

Participant’s Signature: _____ Date _____

REIMBURSEMENT AUTHORIZED

Signature & Title Date _____

APPENDIX E
CITY OF FREEPORT
DOWNTOWN ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM
APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Completed Downtown Accessibility Improvement Grant application
- Copy of Certificate of Appropriateness issued by Historic Preservation Commission
- Written consent from building owner (only if applicant is a tenant)
- Certificate of inspection from Building Inspector and Fire Inspector
- Copy of lease with at least five years remaining (only if applicant is a tenant)
- On-site meeting with Community Development Director & RAMP Representative
_____ Date _____ Initials
- Detailed description of proposed work
- Estimated project completion date submitted
- Copies of contractors estimates (at least two for each project element)
- Photographs of existing building (all affected exterior elements)
- Design of project including dimensions, color and material samples

APPENDIX F

**CITY OF FREEPORT
DOWNTOWN ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM**

FINAL INSPECTION CERTIFICATE

Date _____

Property Address _____

Owner's Name _____

- Work completed by licensed, qualified contractor(s)
- Work completed under authority of valid City of Freeport building permit
- Work completed meets all applicable building codes as adopted by the City of Freeport
- Work completed fully conforms with project description submitted with the Owner's (or Tenant's) application for a City of Freeport Downtown Accessibility Improvement Grant Application

Comments _____

Signature of City Inspector _____ Date _____

Printed Name of City Inspector _____ Inspector's Title _____

APPENDIX G

**CITY OF FREEPORT
DOWNTOWN ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM**

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST CHECKLIST

- Work was completed within one year of the City Council's award of grant
- Copies of all building permits
- Copies of all bills
- Copies of all receipts
- Copy of final inspection report
- Photographs of completed project
- Documentation of compliance with prevailing wage requirements
- Final lien waivers for all contractors and sub-contractors