

# City Council Agenda Item Memo

**From:** Samantha Beckman, Assistant to the City Manager

**Council Meeting:** November 19, 2024

**Subject:** 2025 Proposed Downtown Incentives

**Presenter:** Samantha Beckman, Assistant to the City Manager

## **Summary and Recommended Action:**

As part of a larger downtown revitalization initiative and one of the identified goals within the Downtown Brookings Master Plan, the City of Brookings plans to offer a variety of incentive options for downtown business and property owners beginning January 2025. These incentives include the Downtown Brookings Façade Grant, Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program (DRIP), and the Lights, Camera, Action Grant. Funding for the program was part of the 2025 budget and utilizes reserve funding dedicated for economic infrastructure improvements.

## **Item Details:**

The development and adoption of the Downtown Brookings Master Plan have laid the foundation for ongoing investment in Brookings' historic downtown. To address stakeholder and public feedback, which was gathered during the creation of the master plan, the City plans to offer three key incentive programs aimed at addressing priority needs in building preservation, safety, and interior revitalization of downtown properties. These incentives - the Façade Grant, Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program (DRIP), and the Lights, Camera, Action Grant - represent a proactive approach to preserving downtown's architectural character, improving safety, and creating a vibrant business environment.

These programs were developed in response to challenges identified in the master plan, including aging building facades, enhancement of public safety infrastructure, and the need for functional upgrades to interior spaces.

## Program Overviews and Differences

### 1. Downtown Brookings Façade Grant

This grant focuses on enhancing the architectural and visual appeal of storefront and alley-facing facades within Brookings' designated downtown area. The Façade Grant provides matching funds of up to 50%, with a maximum award of \$25,000 per project, targeting projects with minimum total costs of \$35,000. The program emphasizes historically accurate repairs and updates to building exteriors, encouraging improvements like brick restoration, awning upgrades, and door and window enhancements.

2. Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program (DRIP)

DRIP is designed to support substantial interior renovations in downtown buildings, including life-safety upgrades, ADA improvements, and functional enhancements that increase usability and appeal for businesses, residents, and visitors. This program offers a proposed funding structure which combines the use of grants, low-interest loans, and owner equity, with up to a 33.33% grant match for interior projects costing \$75,000 or more. Property owners are encouraged to match the grant amount with their own capital or financing from local economic development sources.

3. Lights, Camera, Action Grant

This program aims to enhance public safety and walkability by funding improvements related to lighting, security cameras, and other placemaking initiatives, which enhance the perception of safety and pedestrian accessibility in the downtown area. Offering up to a 50% match with a maximum grant of \$2,000, the Lights, Camera, Action Grant assists small-scale, impactful projects such as installing lighting and surveillance equipment accessible to local law enforcement. Downtown Brookings has agreed to administer this program based on the City's provided guidelines.

The Downtown Brookings Façade Grant, Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program, and Lights, Camera, Action Grant work collectively to address the distinct needs identified in the Downtown Brookings Master Plan. These programs provide targeted incentives for property owners to engage in upgrades that preserve Brookings' historic downtown charm, foster economic growth, and create a safer, more engaging environment for residents and visitors. Each program's unique focus supports different aspects of downtown revitalization, creating a comprehensive approach to meet Brookings' development and community goals.

**Legal Consideration:**

City Attorney has reviewed the service contract with Downtown Brookings.

**Strategic Plan Consideration:**

- Fiscal Responsibility – The City of Brookings will responsibly manage resources through transparency, efficiency, equity, and exceptional customer service.
- Safe, Inclusive, Connected Community – The City of Brookings will create an environment for inclusive programs, gathering places, and events where the community can safely live, work and come together to participate in opportunities for learning, recreation and enjoyment.
- Service and Innovation Excellence – The City of Brookings will provide an accessible environment committed to ongoing innovation and outstanding service through listening and engagement.
- Sustainability – The City of Brookings will meet environmental, community and economic desires and needs without compromising future generations' quality of life by strategically planning, implementing and maintaining infrastructure and facilities.

- Economic Growth – The City of Brookings will support effective diversified community investment and equitable opportunities for prosperity.

**Financial Consideration:**

The 2025 Budget earmarks \$320,000 from Economic Development Reserves for the three programs. A total of \$100,000 will be allocated toward the Downtown Brookings Façade Grant, \$200,000 toward the Downtown Interior Revitalization Program, and \$20,000 will be allocated to Downtown Brookings for the administration of the Lights, Camera, Action Grant.

**Supporting Documentation:**

Downtown Brookings Façade Grant  
Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program  
Lights, Camera, Action Grant  
Presentation