The City of Elkhart has developed a unique, multi-pronged incentive package to encourage the redevelopment and revitalization of the Main Street Business District. The incentive packages offer commercial businesses and property owners within the business district financial incentives to make improvements to their properties that will increase the market value and provide a direct impact to the quality of life of Elkhart residents. This program was created using federal American Rescue Plan stimulus funding.

Because of funding source requirements, all projects showing that the business was negatively impacted by COVID-19 will receive priority. Negatively impacted could mean reduced sales between 2020 – 2022; lost employee time due to COVID, or some other documented impact due to the virus. See additional information in the Program Rules.

**COMMERCIAL INTERIOR GRANT**

This program helps commercial businesses in the Main Street District renovate or remodel commercial interior space. Maximum funding for this assistance is $10,000 per property and it requires a 100% match from the business (for example, if the total cost of the project is $10,000, the business would put in $5,000 and this program would match the $5,000). New interior construction is an eligible expense for this assistance. Other eligible costs would include remodel or renovation costs, paint, new fixtures, new walls.

**COMMERCIAL FAÇADE / EXTERIOR GRANT**

This program helps commercial businesses in the Main Street District restore or rehabilitate facades and exteriors on their commercial buildings. Maximum funding for this assistance is $10,000 per property and it requires a 100% match from the business (for example, if the total cost of the project is $8,000, the business would put in $4,000 and this program would match the $4,000). New construction is an eligible expense for this assistance. Other eligible costs would include new facades, new brick work, tuck-pointing, exterior painting.

**Program Procedure**

All commercial businesses that meet the program rules that are located in the Main Street Business District are eligible for this program unless delinquent in paying utility bills or property taxes. The Main Street Business District is defined as:

Commercial properties fronting Main Street from Lincoln Avenue to Garfield Avenue. Commercial properties fronting Garfield Avenue from Walnut Street to Main Street. Commercial properties fronting Railroad Avenue from Walnut Street to Elm Street. Commercial properties fronting Walnut Street from Garfield Avenue to Railroad Avenue.

Because there are limited funds available for this program, applications are reviewed and scored in the order they are received. The highest ranked applications each month will receive grant funding until no program funds are available.

To request assistance through this program, the business owner must submit an application to the city. Applications may be dropped off, mailed or emailed to the following:

Main Street Incentive Program

City of Elkhart

260 NW Main Street

Elkhart, IA 50073

elkhartcityadministrator@cityofelkhart.com

**Program Rules**

Each application will be reviewed and scored by the Planning and Zoning Commission and a recommendation will be made to the City Council. The Council will consider each recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission and will make the final decision to fund the application. The P&Z meets on the 2nd Monday of each month and the council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month. The program will continue until no funds are available.

Because of a requirement of American Rescue Plan funding, priority will be given to businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19. Documentation may include monthly or quarterly sales tax forms or other documents showing a reduction in sales from base year 2019 to the year 2020, 2021 or 2022. Or, the business may provide documentation that employee hours were lost due to COVID. Or, the business may document if they were required to temporarily shut down due to State regulations sometime in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID. In short, if the business can document a negative impact due to the virus, it will receive priority in grant funding.

Also, to be eligible for funding, all projects must not have started prior to January 1, 2021. Each applicant must show invoices of the work completed before being reimbursed through this program. The city reserves the right to request additional information prior to releasing the funds.

This program requires a 100% dollar for dollar match from participating Main Street businesses.

Each property is eligible for up to $20,000 – up to $10,000 per property for interior renovations and up to $10,000 per property for façade or exterior renovations. Properties may apply for separate projects in subsequent years as long as they have not exceeded the $10,000 per grant limit or the $20,000 limit per property AND there are still program funds available.

Eligible commercial properties include the following: commercial retail shops, restaurants, office space, bars and taverns, car and motorcycle repair, new commercial buildings. In order to promote new development in town, new building construction will also receive a weighted priority when reviewing grant applications.

The policies, procedures and incentives described above may be revised by the city at any time without notice. The city retains the exclusive right to change, add to, eliminate or modify the requirements and incentives at any time at its discretion. All projects, funded by incentives, must comply with the city’s comprehensive plan. All labor funded by incentives must be done by a licensed contractor and meet all city codes.