

ITEM #: 14  
DATE: 08-26-25  
DEPT: ADMIN

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR MAIN STREET IOWA CHALLENGE GRANT**

**BACKGROUND:**

Main Street Iowa offers a Challenge Grant program for brick-and-mortar building projects in designated Main Street districts. The program supports projects that conduct impactful building rehabilitation, incorporate quality design and preservation-based strategies, support local revitalization efforts, and are achievable within the two-year contract period. Award amounts range from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

Each Main Street district may submit one application per grant cycle. **This year, Ames Main Street is proposing to submit an application for revitalization of the Ames Train Depot (request letter attached). The proposed project would restore the depot's facade through tuckpointing, replacing damaged bricks, and cleaning. The Depot building is the subject of a long-standing development agreement with the City for it to retain its historic character even though it has not been determined to be eligible for the National Register.**

The application deadline is August 27. Ames Main Street will handle all aspects of the grant application process. **No matching City funds are being requested for the project; the only request is a letter of support from the City. A draft letter of support has been prepared and is attached.**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve a letter of support for the Ames Train Depot project application for the Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant.
2. Do not approve a letter of support for the project.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**The Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant program provides assistance with improvements to buildings in the downtown area. The Train Depot in Downtown Ames is an important community focal point and is in need of exterior restoration work. Supporting the grant would be consistent with the long-term historic value that the City has placed on the structure since the transfer of the site to private ownership in the 1990s.**

**The grant application requires a letter of support from the City. No City funds or staff involvement is anticipated as part of this project.**

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Letter of Proposal for 2025 Challenge Grant Project - Old Train Depot.pdf  
IEDA - Main Street Challenge Grant.docx