



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – September 18, 2019 Agenda Item 2

Voting Session

Resolution Supporting Community Legacy Grant Application for New Hampshire Avenue Signage and Facade Program

Recommended Council Action

Approve the accompanying resolution of support.

Context with Key Issues

The Community Legacy program, administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, is a comprehensive planning-based program designed to implement community-wide revitalization strategies. Funding priorities include projects which have a strategic economic impact, demonstrate evidence of other funding commitments, are located in targeted economic development areas, and are clearly part of an ongoing revitalization effort.

The City has submitted a grant application for the New Hampshire Ave Signage & Facade Program which will provide grants to Takoma Park businesses and property owners in targeted areas along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor to create and install new signage and various facade improvements and beautification.

Most commercial buildings in the corridor are over fifty years old. The largest commercial centers and most small buildings have not been renovated in over 30 years. Business owners have expressed a strong desire to improve the general look and appeal of the area and the commercial properties, focusing on visual appearance of buildings and signage as their highest priorities. The program includes an art component that will allow local artists to work with business owners on key design elements of their signs and facades.

Council Priority

Community Development for an Improved and Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

The program supports a key component of the City's Sustainable Community Plan by reinvesting in existing commercial areas, thus reducing environmental impacts. Enhancing the City's commercial districts is essential in drawing customers to shop locally, rather than driving elsewhere to shop outside of the City which reduces carbon footprints. Well-maintained, attractive shopping centers can become destinations and provide opportunities for residents to walk, bike, explore, and visit within their neighborhoods and encourages a more sustainable lifestyle. Additionally, revitalizing commercial centers that are served by existing infrastructure, public transportation, and a supportive residential population allows the area to be most efficiently used and requires less resources and open space.

Fiscal Considerations

The City has applied for \$150,000 to be given as subgrants. The grant application will leverage the existing \$50,000 budgeted this year for Neighborhood Commercial District Improvement as a match.

Racial Equity Considerations

Over 300 small and diverse businesses operate within the New Hampshire Avenue corridor with over 9,000 households of mixed-income within a 10-minute walk. Despite the lack of investment in the commercial stock which includes aging strip malls build in the 1950s and 1960s, the commercial district hosts a diverse mix of businesses, with a majority concentration of international and minority owned and operated businesses. The City's past efforts in façade improvement and beautification have focused on businesses located along Carroll Avenue in the Old Town section of Takoma Park. This program provides an opportunity to impact businesses in an area that has not yet received the benefits of new signage and façade improvements and beautification.

Attachments and Links

Draft Resolution

Introduced by:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2019 -

**SUPPORT OF SUBMISSION OF FY20 STATE REVITALIZATION PROGRAM
COMMUNITY LEGACY GRANT APPLICATION**

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council recognizes that there is a significant need for reinvestment and revitalization of commercial and residential areas in the community; and

WHEREAS, the economic viability of the commercial area along New Hampshire Avenue have been the focus of numerous planning and economic development studies conducted by the City and other for over ten years; and

WHEREAS, the City has developed a State Revitalization project: the New Hampshire Ave Signage and Facade Program and applied for \$150,000 to provide grants for new signage and façade upgrades and beautification to local businesses and property owners in targeted areas along the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development may provide the majority of the funding for the Program in order to assist in making it financially feasible and leverage already budgeted funds for Neighborhood Commercial District Improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Program is located within a priority funding area and designated as an Opportunity Zone and a Sustainable Communities area and will conform to the local zoning code; and

WHEREAS, the Program will contribute to the goal of making art a part of daily life in the New Hampshire Avenue corridor by including an art component that will allow local artists to work with business owners on key design elements of their signs and facades.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the City Council of the City of Takoma Park supports the funding for the Project and endorses the submission of the City of Takoma Park's FY20 State Revitalization Program Community Legacy grant application for financial assistance totaling \$150,000, in the form of a grants for local businesses along the New Hampshire corridor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City Manager is hereby authorized to execute documents as "Legal Entity Official (LEO)" and take any action necessary to carry out the intent of the resolution.

Adopted this __ day of September, 2019.

Kate Stewart, Mayor

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk