

**CITY OF MONROE
DOWNTOWN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
300 W. CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
Wednesday, March 19, 2025 - 9:00
AM
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval/Acceptance of Minutes of the February 19, 2025 Regular Downtown Advisory Board Meeting (Action Required)
4. Mural Project
5. New Downtown Incentive Grant Discussion
6. Adjourn Meeting (Action Required)

ATTENTION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS: Please contact Matt Black at 704-292-1705, Ext. 6040 to confirm your attendance. Thank you.

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of February, April, June, August and October.

**AS A COURTESY, PLEASE TURN OFF ALL MOBILE DEVICES WHILE MEETING IS
IN PROGRESS.**

**CITY OF MONROE
DOWNTOWN MONROE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
300 W CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112
February 19, 2025
MINUTES**

DAB Members: Chair: Joyce Rentschler, Courtney Garrison, William Heisner, Clint Lawrence, Lisa Boix, Sheila Crunkleton, and Greg Moore were all present.

Staff Present: Mark Watson, City Manager; Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager; and Terry Sholar, Staff Attorney

Visitors Present: Matthew Wilson, owner Patty and the Dogs

Member(s) Absent: None

The Downtown Monroe Advisory Board met on February 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Item 1: Call to order

Joyce Rentschler called the Tuesday, **February 19, 2025** Downtown Advisory Board Regular Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Item 2: Roll Call

Roll was documented by Donna O'Keefe through a sign-in sheet.

Joyce Rentschler asked Sheila Crunkleton to be introduced. Donna O'Keefe introduced her and shared her role as the Red Cross Regional Director. She lives in Monroe and has served in many ways. She is a tenured member of the DAB.

Item 3: Approval of January 24, 2025 Minutes

Joyce Rentschler, introduced this item and asked for a correction from American to Americana.

Motion: William (Bill) Heisner made a motion to approve with correction as described to the January 24, 2025 Minutes of the Downtown Advisory Board Meeting.

Second: Lisa Boix

Action: The motion to accept the January 24, 2025 minutes with correction as described was passed unanimously.

Item 4: Mural Ordinance Discussion – Presented by Terry Sholar, City Staff Attorney

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item

Terry Sholar opened the discussion by informing the board that the city does not currently have any regulations regarding murals downtown. Terry shared with the board, "Murals are a great thing and can be a real benefit to downtown but they can also be detrimental if not done well".

This discussion is in an attempt to get out in front with a draft ordinance. The ordinance covers the following:

1. This ordinance covers definitions of a mural, sign (a picture or design associated with a product, service or business) and explains the difference between a private mural and a public mural. If a design is deemed a sign, it would follow the sign ordinance within the Monroe Unified Development Ordinance or UDO.
2. Downtown murals can only be public murals, commissioned by the City of Monroe, approved through a public process, and the ultimately approved by City Council. The ordinance language covers the civil process of enforcement with civil penalties.

In summary, this ordinance is designed to define murals, and prohibit murals in the Downtown District. Murals that would be allowed are those commissioned by the city and go through a public vetting process.

Sheila Crunkleton brought up several existing murals (angle wings on the Bottle Factory and 47K has a mural on the side of her building). Terry Scholar responded by saying those would probably be grandfathered and remain. He did not think that the city would not go back and enforce them. This ordinance focuses on the future and future mural development downtown.

Joyce Rentschler: "So there is no method at all for a private business to apply for permission for a design to put something on their business"?

Terry Sholar: There is now, there is a mural policy that has been downtown for a long time. So basically, that policy would be replaced.

Sheila Crunkleton: "So if I wanted to put a mural like 47K or Bottle Factory, I would not be allowed"?

Terry Sholar: "Yes that is right". "You would need to come to the city with your idea to be approved that is appropriate. The idea is that murals will have to be commissioned by the city. It would go through the public vetting process and go through it that way. This ensures public input.

Joyce Rentschler: Expressed that she did not originally understand that there would be a process for a private business.

Terry Sholar: Explained that a policy and process will be developed. This ordinance is to hold things where they are so that we can develop that vetting process. That process would include public hearings. The idea is that the artist, building owner, and the city would all join in and approve what's being done, and the city would actually commission the work.

Courtney Garrison: Restated the plan to follow up with and process

Bill Heisner: The example of Americana's sign was presented, Bill asked for clarification on a large sign, Terry Scholar explained that going forward that painting would be covered by the existing sign ordinance. Donna O'Keefe explained that the sign is based on a calculation based on your linear frontage.

Mark Watson, City Manager: So does this mean that if it goes through this process, a private building owner wants to commission something on their building, it comes to the city through the sign ordinance, then goes through a public hearing and vetting, and is then a city sanctioned piece of art"

Terry Sholar: Yes. If a building owner wants a mural on their building they come to the city and we go through the process that the city develops and once it is approved, the city would actually be the one commissioning it as public art downtown. It will all be approved through the vetting process. There is language about policy and procedure that still needs to be worked out. I would like to take this to council for approval.

Joyce Rentschler requested a motion.

Motion: Courtney Garrison made a motion to accept the ordinance as written.

Morgan/Windsor Alley Furnishings Proposal as presented, and recommend the proposal to the General Services Committee.

Second: Bill Heisner

Action: The motion to recommend approval of the Mural Ordinance passed unanimously.

Item 5a: Retail Promotions Sponsorship Application for Spring Fest 2025 – Recusal of Greg Moore on this agenda item

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item

Greg Moore requested a motion to recuse himself from this item and vote.

Motion: Upon instruction from legal, Lisa Boix made the motion for recusal of Greg Moore.

Second: Sheila Crunkleton

Action: The motion to approve the recusal of Greg Moore on this item passed unanimously.

Item 5b: Retail Promotions Sponsorship Application for Spring Fest 2025

Bela Nature 's owner Sandra Murschel has submitted a sponsorship application on behalf of Home Brew's Spring Fest 2025. The event is put on by downtown business es and brings people into downtown each year. The event is April 12, 2025 from 11 – 5 pm. The downtown budget can fund up to one event each quarter not to exceed \$500. This is the first request this quarter and staff recommended approval of \$500 to Sandra Murschel to fund marketing for Springfest 2025.

Motion: Sheila Crunkleton made the motion to approve \$500 to Sandra Murschel for the marketing of Spring Fest.

Second: Lisa Boix

Action: The motion to recommend approval of \$500 Event sponsorship passed unanimously.

Item 6a and b: Economic Development PRONTO and Blade/Suspension Sign Grant for Matthew Wilson, owner Patty and the Dogs.

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item

6a: Economic Development PRONTO Grant Presentation

Donna O'Keefe presented this item. Patty and the Dogs owner Matthew Wilson has entered into a lease agreement for 217 N. Hayne Street to open a new 1200 Square foot restaurant within the Central Business District. Mr. Wilson is making a \$48,000 investment in this new business. It is the recommendation of staff that the Downtown Advisory Board recommend two Downtown incentives with the following stipulations:

6a: PRONTO Grant - Rent Subsidy not to exceed \$6000.

Rent Subsidy: \$5.00 per square foot leased/purchased for restaurant use for a 12 month period. This business is 1200 sq. ft. which allows a maximum of **\$6000** payable quarterly over a year. Payment of Rent Subsidy funds shall be made by City of Monroe to approved applicants at the end of each calendar quarter based on rent paid that quarter. Proof of timely payment of the full amount of rent will be required before Rent Subsidy funds are released.

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Sheila Crunkleton made the motion to approve and recommend the PRONTO Incentive Grant to Matthew Wilson, owner Patty and the Dogs to City Council not to exceed \$6000.

Second: Lisa Biox

Action: The motion to recommend approval of the PRONTO Incentive Grant, not to exceed \$6000, to City Council for Matthew Wilson, owner of Patty and the Dogs passed unanimously.

6b: Economic Development Blade/Suspension Sign Grant Presentation

Donna O'Keefe presented this item. The grant specifically assists in funding a signage project up to \$250 of the total cost. The sign must conform to the City of Monroe's Downtown Business District Sign Ordinance and must have a permit issued. Mr. Wilson has submitted all of the required documents for an \$832.26 sign project.

a) Blade/Suspension Sign Grant of \$250

Staff requests the Downtown Advisory Board make a motion to recommend and approve the Economic Development Blade/Suspension Sign Grant for \$250 to Matthew Wilson, owner of Patty and the Dogs to City Council.

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: William Heisner made the motion to approve and recommend the Blade/Suspension Sign Grant for Matthew Wilson, owner of Patty and the Dogs to City Council.

Second: Greg Moore

Action: The motion to recommend approval the Blade/Suspension Sign Grant of \$250 to City Council for Matthew Wilson, owner of Patty and the Dogs passed unanimously.

Item 7: Economic Development Meet Me Downtown Incentive Grant for Presson Art Gallery, 115 S. Main Street Suite 100, owner James Scott Purdy.

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item.

Donna O'Keefe presented this item. The Meet Me Downtown Incentive was created to assist businesses wishing to locate or relocate Downtown. This program is designed to help with the marketing and advertising that new businesses in order to establish their presence in Downtown and brand Downtown Monroe. This incentive is a 50-50 matching grant. New businesses opening in downtown may apply for up to 50% of the per business cost of their advertising and marketing budget. The Presson Art Gallery owner, James Scott Purdy, opened this retail art gallery on March 15, 2024. The new business occupies approximately 2,930 square feet of retail space and is in Monroe's Central Business District. Grant funds for the Meet Me Downtown Grant cannot exceed \$5,000 and are paid out upon proof of paid invoices for any marketing material proposed in the grant application.

The applicant has provided all of the required documents and paid invoices totaling \$5047.00 and are eligible for 50% in reimbursement or \$2523.50.

Staff request the Downtown Advisory Board approve and recommend the Presson Art Gallery a Downtown Economic Development Meet Me Downtown Incentive Grant to owner James Scott Purdy in the amount of \$2523.50 to City Council.

Motion: Sheila Crunkleton made the motion to approve and recommend the Economic Development Meet Me Downtown Incentive in the amount of \$2523.50 to Presson Art Gallery's owner James Scott Purdy to City Council.

Second: Greg Moore

Action: The motion to recommend approval the Economic Development Meet Me Downtown Incentive Grant of \$2523.50 to Presson Art Gallery's owner James Scott Purdy to City Council passed unanimously.

Item 8: Economic Development Residential Incentive Grant Gateway Development Presson Building at 113/115 S. Main Street owner, James Scott Purdy.

Donna O'Keefe presented this item to the Downtown Advisory Board to consider and recommend to City Council a Downtown Economic Development Residential Incentive Grant to Gateway Development- Presson Building at 113/115 S. Main Street owner, James Scott Purdy.

The Residential Incentive Grant program (RIG) was designed to provide financial assistance to property owners and developers who wish to create upper floor residential

units in the Central Business District. . This grant encourages the inhabitation of this unused space within the downtown area and serves as a catalyst to preserve structures that give downtown its uniqueness. This grant was designed to significantly reduce the costs associated with the rehabilitation of the income producing structures by providing \$20 per \$100 of the assess tax value of the property once the project is completed. This project was completed in March 15, 2024 and has been inspected for completion. The new tax appraised value was provided on by the Union County Tax Assessor Office on January 2, 2025. The new assessed value after improvements, is \$1,112,300.

The rehabilitation of 113/115 S. Main Street was substantial and the eligible costs incurred with in the project included; Construction costs of \$1,084,320, Construction Interest of \$62,525, Architectural and Engineering fees of \$171,971 for a total of \$1,319,316. This amount is 67.43% if the total building renovation costs and meets the required 2x the amount of the grant. Based on the residential portion (3010 square feet) of the assessed value, the calculated residential grant is \$111,674.92.

Mark Watson, City Manager stepped in to explain the tax incentive and the tax rate applied to this building. He also shared that he expected at least 2 more of these RIG coming forward in the future. Mark explained that we budget ahead based on a historical average for these types of grants.

Staff requests Downtown Advisory Board recommend the approval Residential Improvement Grant of \$111,674.92 to City Council.

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Sheila Crunkleton made the motion to recommend the Residential Improvement Grant to

Second: Lisa Biox

Action: The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Additional Announcement

Donna O'Keefe shared with the board the opening of Murphy's on Main and the hope of an open house to see the business and the three new upper residences at the end of March.

Item 9: Adjourn (Action Required)

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Clint Lawrence moved to adjourn.

Second: Lisa Biox

Action: The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Downtown Advisory Board

VIA: Jeff Wells, Assistant City Manager

DATE: March 18, 2025

FROM: Donna O’Keefe, Downtown Manager

PREPARED BY: Donna O’Keefe, Downtown Director

SUBJECT: Mural Design Review

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Design review and approval of the Windsor Alley mural design by The Girls Who Paint Murals.

REVIEW

The first mural project location was moved to Windsor Alley on March 12, 2025. This first mural will serve as a pilot, allowing staff to develop a stronger mural project plan that will benefit all of our future mural projects and property owners. The first mural project will be installed in Morgan/Windsor Alley as part of the alley improvement project.

Staff worked with the contracted artists, The Girls Who Paint Murals to develop a new design for the new location using the original feedback received by the mural design committee.

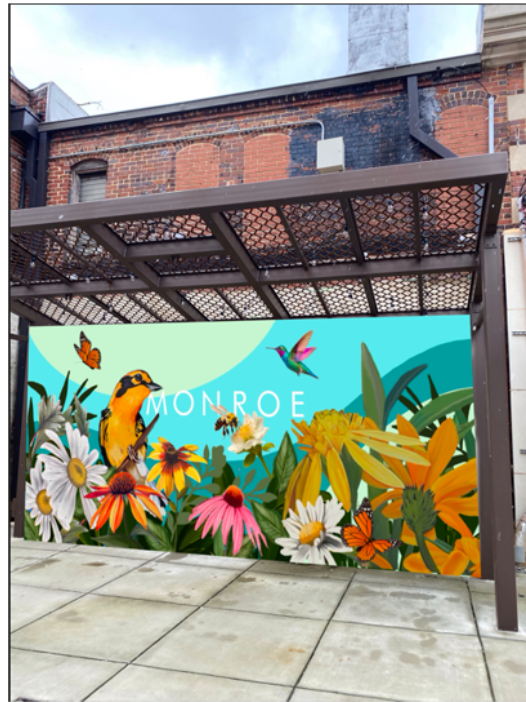
The Downtown Advisory Board is requested to recommend the mural design and instruct staff to present their recommendation to City Council at their Strategic Meeting on April 8, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting the Downtown Advisory Board recommend the mural design for installation to City Council on April 8, 2025.

Attachment(s):
Photos

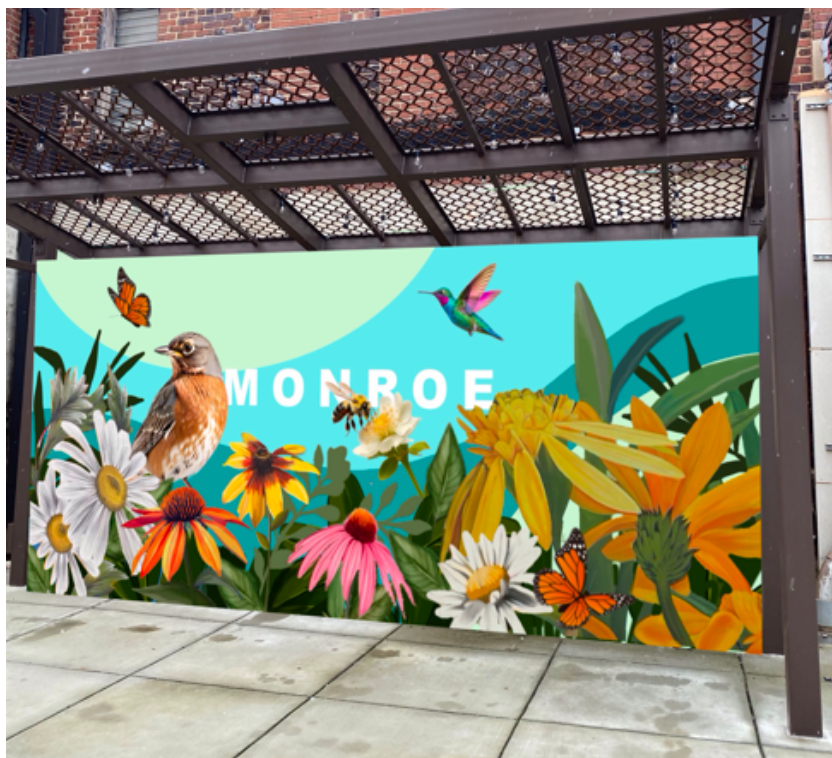
Windsor Alley Mural Project
Artists: The Girls Who Paint Murals
Install Date: April 21 – 25, 2025



Option1



Option 2



Option 3

DOWNTOWN BUILDING REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM



Overview:

The City of Monroe values the commercial buildings in the downtown area and has created the Downtown Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Grant (BRIG) to offer an incentive that stimulates investment and encourages property and business owners to make improvements to their building(s) and/or business operations. This reimbursement grant provides assistance with the significant improvement and rehabilitation of properties in the Downtown Business District. Improvement of these buildings preserves downtown's unique attributes and promotes economic growth by attracting and retaining residents and businesses, creates jobs, and reduces the deterioration of properties in the downtown district.

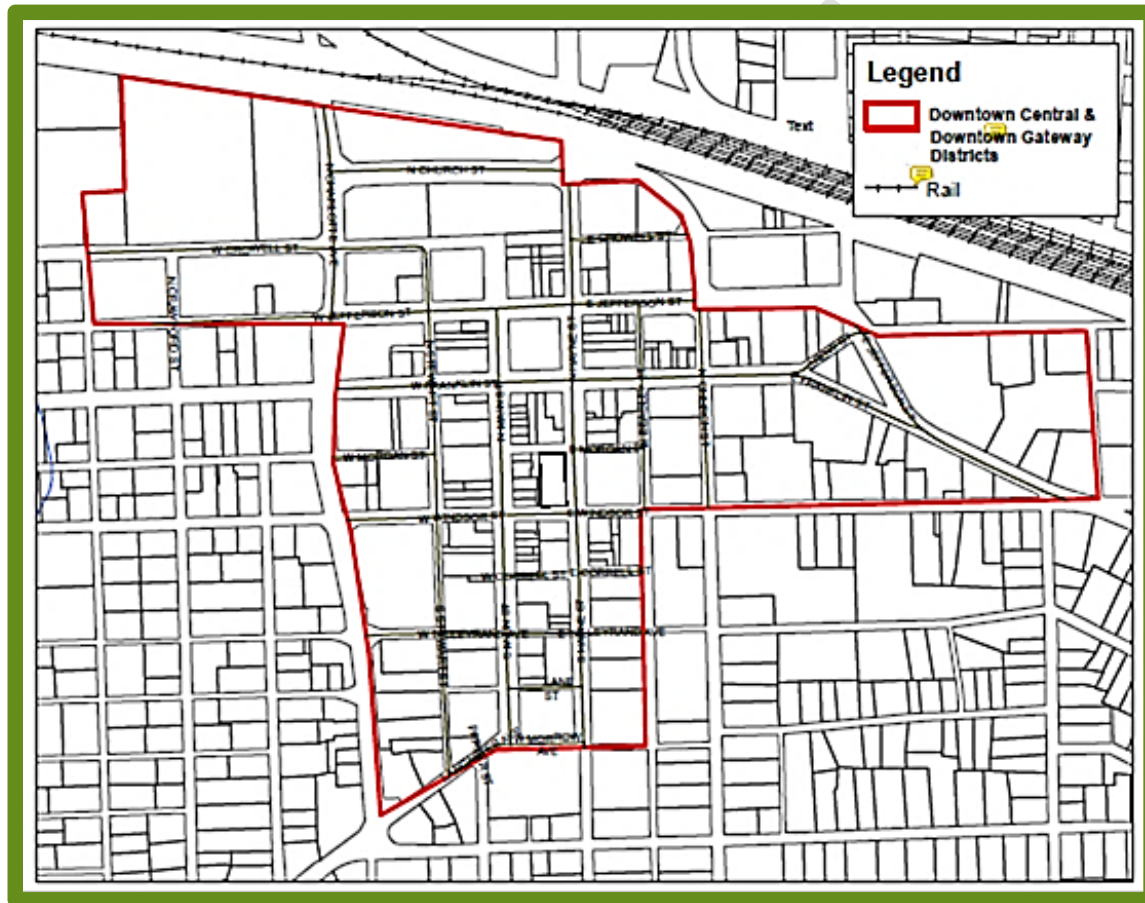
The Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Grant (BRIG) program provides matching grants (50/50) that encourage improvements and/or upgrades to the interior and exteriors of buildings in the Business District to make them more attractive for new, existing, and expanding businesses and residences.

Grant applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Awards are based on the availability of funds and meeting the programs requirements. Work done prior to approval of an application is not eligible for reimbursement.

Eligible Properties:

A commercial building located within the Central and Gateway Districts of downtown Monroe. Private dwellings are not eligible unless they originally functioned as commercial buildings and were later converted.

Only one application per year, per property is eligible (Separate addresses within a single building may qualify if there is more than one tenant). The applicant may be either the owner or a tenant of the building (tenant/s will need to have written permission from the owner).



The Grant:

This is a 50/50 matching reimbursement grant. Approved applicants are eligible for (50%) of the eligible costs up to a maximum amount of 10% of the tax value (After improvements). Payments will be made upon the completion of the project, review of receipts by a designated member of City Staff and the final approval of City Council.

Example:

An applicant submits documentation for \$222,000 in eligible improvements with a tax value (after improvements) of \$880,000. The applicant would qualify for \$88,000 in reimbursement.

Requirements:

- Applicants must obtain approval from the Downtown Manager/Director prior to beginning work. Work completed prior to approval will not be eligible for any reimbursement.
- All rehabilitation work must comply with City Zoning and Building Code requirements, local ordinances, historic district requirements (if applicable), and established standards within the designated area.
- All work must meet the guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Supplementary Requirements for Development in the Central Business District* [City of Monroe Code of Ordinances Title XV, Chapter 156.054] will be used as guidelines for awarding project reimbursements.
- Applicant must show proof of ownership or a leasing contract if the property is leased.
- A certificate of occupancy is required upon completion of the project.
- All approved work must be completed within 1 year of the application approval. If a project will require additional time, the applicant will need to make that request in writing before the 1 year limit expires.

Eligible projects include:

- Structural Repairs including masonry repair and restoration
- Roofing repair/replacement
- Plumbing, electrical, HVAC and similar elements
- Construction for accessibility, fire code, etc.
- Painting
- Flooring
- Building façade, or building side which faces a public right of way including; Removal of false fronts, cleaning of brick, and/or historic reconstruction.
- Window, front door repair/replacement - the repair of original material that adhere to the Secretary of Interiors standards for Historic Rehabilitation and EPA Guidelines.
- Installation of new pedestrian amenities such as city approved outdoor seating, awnings, and lighting.
- Railing and ironwork repair
- Cornice repair/replacement
- Exterior step repair/replacement
- Equipment repair/replacement
- Energy efficiency upgrades
- Improving restroom facilities
- Improving or re-installing stairways
- Upfit, replacement, or new installation of an elevator
- Other projects not listed will be considered unless ineligible

Ineligible projects include:

- Building and land acquisition
- New building construction
- Interior design services
- Architectural design services
- Demolition expenses
- Fire, flood, or water damage repairs
- Furnishings, equipment, or personal property not part of the building construction repair or replacement
- Legal, zoning, or building permit fees
- Routine maintenance work
- Parking lot repair/resurfacing
- Pest extermination
- Work on an active code compliance citation
- Work begun prior to application submittal meeting or done without required permits

Application Procedures

1. Submission of the grant application with all required forms and documents to the Downtown Office.

Application Checklist	
Completed application	
Summary outlining the full extent of work	
A minimum of 2 quotes from licensed, bonded, and insured contractor/s covering full extent of work	
Site plans, elevation plans, drawings,	
Photos of existing conditions	
Certificate of Appropriateness, if property is within the Local Historic District	
Copies of all required permit application	
Property owner's written permission, if tenant is applying.	

2. The Downtown Manager/Director will schedule an application review meeting with an applicant (within two weeks of receipt of application).
3. Staff will present the application and documents to the Downtown Advisory Board. Upon their recommendation, staff will request a call for a public hearing. The award recommendation will then be presented to City Council at their next regularly scheduled meeting. If approved, funds will be encumbered and held until the project is completed.
4. An approval letter will be mailed, emailed, or given by hand to the applicant upon approval. If an application is not approved, the downtown office will convey the rejection through email along with the reason for the rejection.

Application Review and Reimbursement Procedures

Upon completion of the project in accordance with the approved plan of work and a new tax appraised value by the Union County Tax Assessor is completed, the applicant will submit the following to the Downtown Manager/Director:

- Copy of Certificate of Occupancy
- Copies of paid invoices for total rehabilitation costs (invoices must reflect a zero balance and signed by the contractor on the contracting invoice or letter head).
- Photos of improvements
- New Tax appraised value by the Union County Tax Assessor
- Any remaining documentation requested by the Downtown office.

The improvements will be inspected and approved by Downtown Manager/Director or approved City Staff member. Once completed the Accounting department will issue a check to the applicant. If the site inspection based on the scope of work is not satisfactory, the applicant will be notified and allowed up to thirty working days for correction of unsatisfactory items.

New Business and Residential Incentive Escalators

Additional escalators to the BRIG grant have been established to encourage companies, businesses, and investors considering relocating or expanding to or within the Central Business district. These escalators are calculated after the BRIG grant reimbursement has been confirmed.

1. An additional 10% of the total grant award if the company or business is part of one of the approved business clusters (See table below) and creates a minimum of 3 new jobs.
2. An additional 10% of the total grant award if an existing company or business will be relocating or establishing their new business in a vacant space on floors above the street level.
3. An additional 20% of the total grant amount to applicant who is creating residential units in floors above the street level.

Cluster	Business type
Financial Services and Insurance	Financial Investment and Related Activities
	Credit Intermediation and Related Activities
	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities
Professional Services	Accounting, Bookkeeping and Auditing
	Human Resources and Payroll Services
	Architectural, Engineering, Design and Surveying Services

	Medical, Dental or Optical Services
	Law firms and Legal Services
	Public Relation Services
	Real Estate Services
	Recruitment Services
	Graphic Design Services
Information Technology and Industry	Software Development
	Media, Film and Video Production
	Analytics and Cybersecurity Consulting
	Cybersecurity Consulting
Retail Stores	Art and Craft Supply, Antiques, Vintage, and Collectables, Children and Baby, Bath and Body, Beauty and Cosmetics, Bike, Bookstores, Bridal and Formal Wear, Apparel, Florist, Furniture, Hobby Sports Equipment, Home Décor, Jewelry, Kitchenware, Music and Musical Instruments, Footwear, Printing and Stationery , and Pharmacies.
Restaurants and Food Service	Bakeries, Coffee Stores, Fish Market, Gourmet Food Stores, Ice Cream Shops, Natural Food Stores, Tea Shops, Delicatessens, Ethnic Grocery Stores, Farmers Markets and Butcher Shops
Hospitality	Hotel, Bed and Breakfast, Health and Fitness, Event Spaces, Spas, and Wellness Centers.

**Applicants are required to meet performance requirements which may include, but are not limited to, job creation, level of capital investment, creation of new residential units.*

Example:

An applicant (also the property owner) submits an application to move their existing accounting firm to the second floor of a building in the Central Business district and add 3 new jobs as part of their plan. The building they have purchased has an existing retail business on the street level and 2 vacant upper floors in need of significant renovation. Their application fully outlines the extent of their planned work and they have included: Site plans, drawing, photos of existing conditions, copies of required permit applications along with price quotes from licensed, bonded, and insured contractors. They estimate the work will total \$250,000 in eligible improvements. This will make them eligible for 50% of their final costs up to a maximum amount of 10% of their tax value after improvements or an amount not to exceed \$125,000. Their application is presented at a public hearing and approved by City Council.

After the work is completed the owner submits all of the required documents along with documentation of the new tax value (after improvements) from Union County of \$880,000. As a result of the new tax value, the applicant would now only qualify for \$88,000 in reimbursement.

Since this applicant is expanding and adding 3 new jobs on the second and third floors of an existing building they would qualify for:

1. +10% because their business is in one of the approved clusters, and adding an additional 3 jobs.
2. +10% because they renovating and relocating this business to a vacant 2nd and 3rd floor of an existing building.

The final reimbursement would be \$104,000.

**Insert Application
Here**

XXXX (Name) MONROE - A Grant program to support new or expanding businesses



Overview:

The City of Monroe is committed to supporting and promoting new and existing businesses in the Downtown Business District by providing financial assistance through an incentive grant that helps to off set the costs associated opening a new business, or expanding an existing business.

The Grant:

The **XXXX MONROE** grant program is a matching 50/50 incentive grant program designed to provide assistance with rental expenses, marketing expenses, up-fit expenses, or expansion costs.

Awards are determined using a formula based square footage.

1. **New businesses** are eligible for \$6.00 per sq foot for retail/office and \$8.00 per square foot for food service/restaurants opening in the Downtown Business District.
2. **Expanding businesses** are eligible for \$4.00 per square foot for retail/office and \$6.00 per square foot for food service/restaurant for the addition of square footage to an existing business in the Downtown Business District. Applicants who have received an incentive award within the prior 5 years are not eligible.

Requirements:

Applicants must submit a completed application and obtain approval from the Downtown Manager/Director.

- For new businesses the application must be received within 6 months of opening.
 - For expansions of existing businesses the application and approval will be required prior to beginning the expansion project.
- The new or expanding business must be in one of the approved clusters/business types and create a minimum of 3 new jobs. (See table below)
- The business must operate their business a minimum of 6 days per week or 45 hours per week.
- Applicants must show proof of ownership or a leasing contract if the property is leased. Business owners who are tenants of a building (minimum three-year lease) must provide written consent from the building owner for all proposed improvements. In addition, the grant application must be signed by the property owner.
- New businesses will be required to provide a business and marketing plan as well as certificate of occupancy, and all approved permits.
- Applicants for expansion assistance must be adding additional square footage to their existing business as well as creating 3 new jobs.
- Existing businesses will be required to provide a detailed description of their expansion plan including: Current square footage and square footage after expansion, cost for all proposed improvements including 2 price quotes from a licensed/bonded and insured contractor, description and cost for new equipment that will be part of the expansion project. Description of marketing plan and cost including estimate. Copies of all approved permits.



Downtown Business District Description:

Beginning at the CXS Railroad Right of Way and Charlotte Ave. to Lancaster Ave. Lancaster Ave. to Morrow Ave., Morrow Ave. to Church St., Church St. to Windsor St., Windsor St. to Franklin St., Franklin St. to Jefferson St., Jefferson St. to Church St., Church St. to the CXS Railroad Right of Way, the CXS Railroad Right of Way to Charlotte Ave., the place of beginning.

Cluster	Business type
Financial Services and Insurance – Second Floor locations Only	Financial Investment and Related Activities
	Credit Intermediation and Related Activities
	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities
Professional Services – Second Floor locations Only	Accounting, Bookkeeping and Auditing
	Human Resources and Payroll Services
	Architectural, Engineering, Design and Surveying Services
	Medical, Dental or Optical Services
	Law firms and Legal Services
	Public Relation Services
	Real Estate Services
	Recruitment Services
	Graphic Design Services
Information Technology and Industry– Second Floor locations Only	Software Development
	Media, Film and Video Production
	Analytics and Cybersecurity Consulting
	Cybersecurity Consulting
Retail Stores – Street Level and Upper floor locations	Art and Craft Supply, Antiques, Vintage, and Collectables, Children and Baby, Bath and Body, Beauty and Cosmetics, Bike, Bookstores, Bridal and Formal Wear, Apparel, Florist, Furniture, Hobby Sports Equipment, Home Décor, Jewelry, Kitchenware, Music and Musical Instruments, Footwear, Printing and Stationery , and Pharmacies.
Restaurants and Food - Service Street Level and Upper floor locations	Bakeries, Coffee Stores, Fish Market, Gourmet Food Stores, Ice Cream Shops, Natural Food Stores, Tea Shops, Delicatessens, Ethnic Grocery Stores, Farmers Markets and Butcher Shops
Hospitality- Street Level and Upper floor locations	Hotel, Bed and Breakfast, Health and Fitness, Event Spaces, Spas, and Wellness Centers.

Eligible Business Up-Fit Expenses

For a food service business:

- Refriderators, Freezers, and Coolers

- Oven, Ranges, Grill, and Ventilation
- Fryers and Grease Interceptor, Grease Trap or Receptacle
- Washing equipment
- Safety Equipment
- Point of sale equipment
- Lighting
- Construction of outdoor dining or gathering spaces
- City approved outdoor furniture

For a retail/office business:

- Point of sale equipment
- Lighting
- Permanent fixtures
- Security equipment

Example:

A 2200 square food service business would be eligible for \$17,600. The same business spends \$30,000 on eligible expenses, making them eligible for a \$15,000 award. *(The business would have to needed to spend \$35,200 to receive the maximum award for their square footage of \$17,600).*

Grant applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Awards are based on the availability of funds and meeting the programs requirements.

Eligible Marketing Expenses

- Signage including: Blade Sign, Wall/Attached Sign, Canopy Awning Sign, Window sign, or Sidwalk Sign

Blade Sign	A sign attached directly to a supporting building wall and intersecting the building wall at a right angle. A Projecting/Blade Sign may be used in lieu of a Canopy/Awning sign. Shall not extend above the roof line or the parapet wall. Buildings with two (2) or more stories shall not have a projecting sign located higher than the second story or twenty-four (24) feet, whichever is less.
Wall/Attached	A sign attached directly to a building wall above the entrance, limited to one per façade, per building tenant Awnings
Canopy/Awning Sign	A sign attached to, or affixed to, a canopy/awning. Canopy/awning signs shall have a minimum clearance of nine (9) feet from the surface below and a maximum height of four (4) feet above the clearance.

Window Sign	A sign attached flat, but parallel, to the inside of a window. These signs shall only be placed on the first floor windows and a maximum of 20% of all windows may be covered by a window sign.
Sidewalk Sign	A sidewalk sign (also commonly referred to as a sandwich board sign) allows for the display of a message on the sidewalk. A maximum of one (1) sidewalk sign shall be permitted and located in front of/adjacent to the entrance. Sign area shall be limited to a maximum of eight (8) square feet per side. Sign width is limited to a maximum two (2) feet. Sign height is limited to a maximum four (4) feet. May not be placed in a way that obstructs pedestrian traffic.

**Signs must conform to the city of Monroe's Downtown CBD Sign Ordinance. Signs must be designed, manufactured, and installed by a professional sign company/contractor*

Rent Subsidy (New businesses only)

Rent subsidy assistance awards 50% of a new businesses rent for the first 12 months. Funds shall be made by the City of Monroe to approved applicants after their first 6 and again after 12 months. Proof of timely payment of the full amount of rent will be required before Rent Subsidy funds are released.

Eligible Expansion Projects (Existing businesses)

This is for businesses expanding the footprint of an existing business within the Downtown District. Interior remodeling including walls, electrical, plumbing, ADA improvements, safety improvements, painting

- Purchase of equipment and fixtures that are part of the expansion project scope of work
- Construction of outdoor dining or gathering spaces
- City approved outdoor furniture

Example:

The addition of unfinished space within existing building, or the addition of adjacent outdoor space that is being upgraded.

Ineligible Expansion Projects

It is not the purpose of the program to finance ongoing improvements which could be considered part of a building's routine maintenance and upkeep.

- Expansion projects completed prior to approval by the Downtown Manager or Director will be ineligible.
- Interior furniture or decor
- Administrative, accounting, and legal costs
- Extermination of insects, rodents, vermin, and other pests
- Legal fees, Title reports, and escrow fees
- Refinancing existing debt, or operational costs
- Working capital for businesses
- Environmental assessments

- Nonvisible mechanical equipment (including HVAC, Security Cameras, etc.) and related screening
- Temporary, portable, or non-permanent improvements
- Routine maintenance and repair
- Purchase of tools

Example:

An existing restaurant in the Downtown Business District plans to expand their square footage from 1300 to 2300 square feet. As part of their expansion plan, they will be updating some of their kitchen equipment, painting their interior, replace the existing floors and adding city approved outdoor furniture. They plan to market the event and host a “Grand Reopening” event.

Based on the program guidelines they are eligible for \$6.00 per square foot on the expansion square footage of 1000 Sq. ft. or \$6000 max. To reach the maximum reimbursement amount they will have to provide paid invoices for \$12,000 in expenses.

After a full review of documentation the business has provided \$15,050 in eligible expenses. This means they will be awarded the full \$6000 based on their expanded square footage.

Application Procedures

1. Submission of the grant application with all required forms and documents to the Downtown Office.

Application Checklist	
Completed application	
Statement of Personal history and experience	
Letter of intent to lease or purchase, or a signed lease/purchase contract (required for rent subsidy)	
Business/Marketing plan	
Summary detailing the full scope of work and projected expenses	
To ensure efficient use of program funds all proposed project must be submitted with at least two construction or marketing bids/estimates from licensed, bonded, and insured contractor/s or reputable marketing company.	
Photos of existing conditions	
Site plans, elevation plans, drawings, or mock ups	
Copies of all approved permits	
Property owner's written permission, if tenant is applying.	

2. The Downtown Manager/Director will schedule an application review meeting with an applicant (within two weeks of receipt of application).
3. An approval letter will be mailed, emailed, or given by hand to the applicant upon approval. If an application is not approved, the downtown office will convey the rejection through email along with the reason for the rejection.
4. Staff will present the application and documents to the Downtown Advisory Board. Upon their recommendation, staff will request a call for a public hearing. The award recommendation will then be presented to City Council at their next regularly scheduled meeting. If approved, funds will be encumbered and held until the project is completed.

Project Review and Reimbursement Procedures

Upon completion of the project in accordance with the approved application the applicant will submit the following to the Downtown Manager/Director:

- Copies of paid invoices for all eligible costs (invoices must reflect a zero balance and signed by the contractor on the contracting invoice or letter head).
- Photos of expansion or improvements
- Any remaining documentation requested by the Downtown office.

The scope of work approved in the application will be inspected by Downtown Manager/Director or approved City Staff member. Once completed the Accounting department will issue a check from funds approved through City Council, to the applicant. If the site inspection based on the scope of work is not satisfactory, the applicant will be notified and allowed up to thirty working days for correction of unsatisfactory items.

The City of Monroe reserves the right to waive or increase incentive program requirements and to interpret and/or adjust incentive program eligibility as it deems necessary. The City of Monroe reserves the right to receive, decline, review, and approve/deny application from uses not fitting within the above criteria on a case by case basis. The City of Monroe will base its decisions based on the applicant's anticipated impact on the overall economic health of Downtown Monroe.

**Insert Application
Here**