VIRGINIA MAIN STREET'S SMARP (SMALL AREA PLAN) GRANT PROGRAM

Wytheville, Virginia



PREPARED FOR

PREPARED BY

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Each community has the autonomy to adapt this information or explore alternative projects within the grant criteria.

VIRGINIA MAIN STREET PROGRAM'S SmArP (SMALL AREA PLAN) GRANT PROGRAM

Overview

As it continues to offer technical resources and grant funds to downtowns across the Commonwealth, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's.

Virginia Main Street (VMS) program is pleased to announce this one-time grant opportunity to create Small Area Plans for downtowns in both Advancing Virginia Main Street (AVMS) and Mobilizing Main Street (MMS) communities. These SmArP grants are available to communities with applications that comply with the following criteria:

Grant Criteria:

Across all grant opportunities, VMS seeks projects that:

1. **Promote a community's unique identity-defining assets—both built and cultural;**
2. **Promote inclusive collaboration and engagement with a vast and diverse set of local partners, leaders, stakeholders, and residents;**
3. **Promote local entrepreneurs, small businesses, women- and/or minority-owned businesses, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and small-scale development;**
4. **Promote equal access to opportunity and thoughtfully acknowledge and address diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) challenges and opportunities; and**
5. **Promote the awareness, growth and financial sustainability of the local Main Street organization.**

Grants are available to designated Advancing Virginia Main Street (AVMS) organizations and must be administered through the local Main Street organization and to Mobilizing Main Street Communities and must be administered by designated staff responsible for the Main Street program. Applicants must be current on all VMS and DHCD reports (as applicable) and comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements denoted below.



Project Scope:

Applicant communities must present a focused small area plan within a designated Main Street or mobilizing Main Street district or the entire district for an overall master plan for a smaller commercial district. The proposed plan should prioritize connectivity, aiming to enhance the downtown's linkages with other parts of the community.

Physical Improvements:

Emphasis should be placed on both public realm enhancements as well as enhancement to economic vitality through private sector improvements. Proposals focusing solely on streetscape or park/plaza projects are discouraged unless part of a larger plan that includes broader connectivity and private sector enhancements.

Partnerships

Successful grants will be the indicative of strong partnerships efforts. Proposals must provide evidence of partnerships, such as letters of support, resolutions, or collaborative agreements, with key stakeholders demonstrating a collective commitment to downtown revitalization.

Prior Proactive Work

Preference will be given to projects building upon prior proactive work by the community. Additionally, projects can serve as a catalyst, initiating planning efforts in areas where prior planning has not occurred.

Market Analysis and Marketing

While market analysis and marketing may be components of the plan, proposals focusing solely on marketing initiatives are not eligible. The primary focus should be on physical improvements and connectivity and the market evidence to support private sector improvements.



SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Project Overview:

Applicants must clearly define the project title, location, and duration in the proposal overview.

Project Description:

Provide detailed description of the proposed small area plan or downtown plan should be provided, emphasizing connectivity, physical improvements, and private sector enhancements.

Partnerships:

The proposal must outline partnerships involved, including letters of support, resolutions, and collaborative agreements, showcasing a commitment to a collaborative approach.

Building on Prior Work:

Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project leverages and builds upon prior proactive work by the community, ensuring a seamless continuation of development efforts.

Connectivity:

Effectiveness in enhancing connectivity within the downtown or between the district and other parts of the community will be a key criterion for evaluation.

Feasibility and Sustainability:

Proposals will be evaluated for the feasibility and sustainability of proposed improvements and their long-term impact on the community, ensuring practical and enduring revitalization efforts.

Budget Overview:

A detailed budget breakdown for the grant funds requested, including a timeline for fund utilization, should be presented. The budget should align with project goals and objectives, with information on any matching funds or additional financial support secured. Prior grant performance, public and private investment, and matching local funds will be evaluated as part of the grant application.

Unallowable Activities

Funds are not available for continuing operations, program administration, or any other ongoing operational expenses. Funds are not available for predictable expenses for which the community or organization could have reasonably planned (for example, general marketing materials, financial management expenses, etc.). Additionally, funds may not be simply “passed through” the Main Street organization to third parties.

Applicant communities are encouraged to align their proposals with these criteria, ensuring an integrated approach to downtown revitalization aligning with the objectives of the Virginia Main Street Program.



SCORING RUBRIC

Grant applicants are scored on a 0-100 point scale. Grant funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. Funds will be 4dallocated from top scoring until all funds are exhausted.

The project scoring methodology is as follows:

Criteria	Points
Project impact on physical connectivity of the district to key assets	30
Relation to community/organization's strategies/goals	20
Organizational capacity/readiness	20
Realistic project work plan and budget	10
Alignment with VMS's priorities	10
Recognition of reconnaissance visit priorities report	10
Total	**100**



SITE VISIT

Downtown Wytheville, Incorporated

Background

Established in 1790 as the seat of Wythe County, the town of Wytheville was ultimately incorporated in 1939. The town was a strategic location along the Great Wilderness Road, beginning as a stagecoach stop that evolved to a bustling hub for commerce and government. Downtown was the heart of activity and grew with the expansion of the railroad and nearby mining industry, and it has preserved its heritage in its historic landmarks, numerous museums, and active events.

Downtown Wytheville Incorporated (DWI) was formed to drive the economic and physical revitalization of downtown and has seen tremendous success in the short decade since it was founded. DWI's work has driven $20.5 million in private investment and $9 million in public investment including the Edith Bolling Wilson Hotel, the restoration of the Millwald Theater, the creation of an indoor/outdoor farmers market facility, as well as several other catalyst projects.

In recent years, Downtown Wytheville has focused on small business sustainability facilitating Evolution Wytheville, a community business launch program that led to 38 jobs and millions in private investment during the pandemic.



SMALL AREA PLAN

Project Description

The Downtown Wytheville Association now seeks to continue its strong partnership with the Town of Wytheville by improving the pedestrian connections and public gathering space for active events and recreation, anchored by the potential for private investment. The small area plan would incorporate the area along the Heritage Walk through the downtown district from Spiller Street to Washington Street.

The ideal small area plan would examine the following:

- Expansion of the downtown district two blocks from Main Street from Withers Park to Elizabeth Brown Park.
- Plans for the redevelopment of Withers Park as a more effective community gathering place and greenspace.
- Plans for the redesign of Elizabeth Brown Park as an outdoor venue for planned events.
- Complete plans and designs for small alleyway pocket park.
- Improve pedestrian connection between Downtown's neighborhoods to its museums, parks, and business district along Main Street.
- Plans for renovations and/or redevelopment of the currently vacant 4th Street Community Center as an active public facility.
- Enhanced pedestrian amenities and connection to the Millwald Theater and the Wytheville Farmers Market.
- Plans for more active and year-round use of the Farmers Market building.
- Engagement of property and business owners within the small area plan and downtown to craft a vision based on robust input.
- Business recruitment within these two blocks of Main Street to bring more active retail, restaurants, and activity that complements the programming at the Millwald and adjacent parks. This could include potential façade improvements that would foster retail expansion.
- The plan should include detailed implementation recommendations including phasing, next steps, and broad cost estimates.



Partnerships:

- Downtown Wytheville Incorporated
- Town of Wytheville
- Millwald Theater
- Wytheville Farmers Market
- Business owners and property owners within the small area plan district.

Building on Prior Work:

- DWI has proposed a realignment of the downtown district for the area included in this small area plan and is seeking approval from Virginia Main Street.
- Millwald Theater, Inc. completed a full-scale historic rehabilitation of its building and reopened in late 2022.
- Multiple phases of Wytheville's Heritage Walk have been planned and implemented including the section that crosses the center of the small area plan area.
- Completed streetscape along Main Street.
- Visioning with Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture students for alleyway pocket park.

Connectivity, Feasibility and Sustainability:

- Continue DWI's focus on small business sustainability efforts to grow more active retail businesses in this section of downtown.
- Connect the Millwald Theater and downtown businesses to residential neighborhoods adjacent to downtown.
- Expand downtown district and define space for additional private investment.

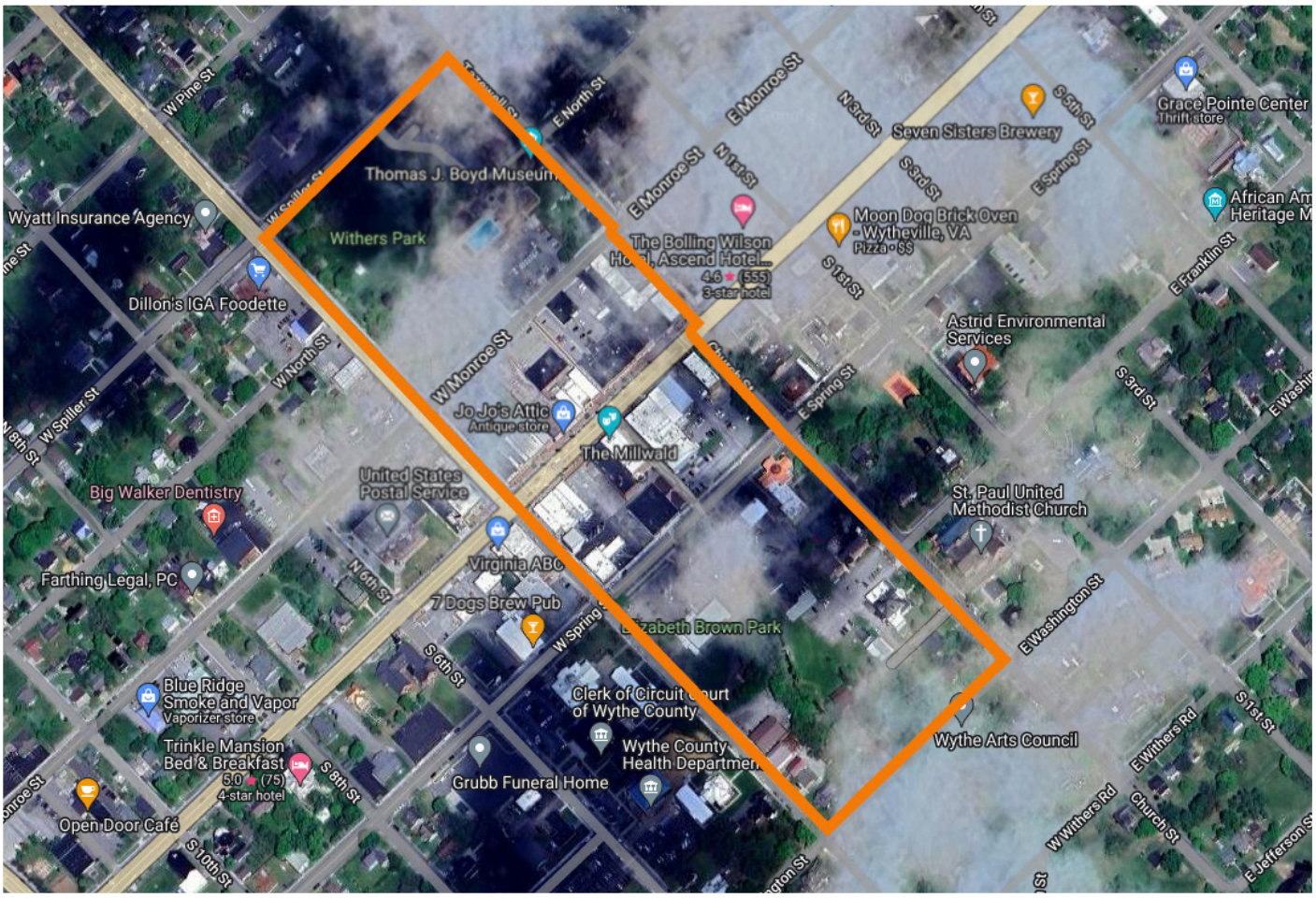
Desired Outcomes:

- Activate this section of Main Street as an event venue and festival area.
- Attract street-level retail and dining establishments that complement current uses. Relocate first floor office uses to upper floors.
- Create improved pedestrian connections to adjacent residential.



SMALL AREA PLAN

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY





CURRENT DISTRICT

PROPOSED CULTURAL REALIGNMENT

HERITAGE WALK

PUBLIC PARKING

WYTHEVILLE MESUEMS

GREENSPACE PARKS

