

YPSILANTI



DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION

April 28, 2006

FROM: Ingrid Ault, Interim Director, DDA

SUBJECT: Michigan Main Street Program grant application

SUMMARY & BACKGROUND: It is requested that the City Council agenda for May 2, 2006 include consideration of support for the Michigan Main Street grant application through the Cool Cities program initiated by

Governor Jennifer Granholm.

The Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority and the Depot Town Downtown Development Authority have authorized the submission of the Michigan Main Street grant. The application is a follow up effort to the 2005 application that was unsuccessful. We have been encouraged to re-apply, thus we are asking for the support of city council.

The State of Michigan is under contract with the National Main Street Center (an affiliate of the National Trust for Historic Preservation) to offer this opportunity to gain training, support and resources to help communities revitalize struggling downtown business districts. Since the 1970s, the National Main Street Center has utilized a proven four-point approach that organizes local efforts in the areas of design, economic restructuring, promotions and organization to guide downtown revitalization initiatives. The approach has been effective in turning around downtown districts across the U.S. and it's a sign of commitment viewed favorably by developers and investors.

During the three- year designation, Ypsilanti's downtown would benefit from over \$166,000 in technical and professional assistance through the National Main Street Center and various State of Michigan departments. This assistance would come in the form of local workshops to provide local downtown leaders with needed expertise and resources as well as joint workshops and training with other Michigan Main Street communities. One prime example of support is that the State Historic Preservation Office has secured an architect who is responsible for preparing plans, specifications and estimates for 9 building/façade renovation projects (locally selected) in the downtown over the three-year period.

Under this proposal, the DDA Board of Directors would become the Main Street Area Board of Directors and the DDA Director would be redefined as the Main Street Manager. Our responsibilities as the DDA would continue but would become a component of the overall Main Street program. The DDA operating budget would also become the primary budget for Main Street activities but would be supplemented by additional public and private funding support. Key partners would include the Central Business Community, City of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce, and Ypsilanti Convention & Visitors Bureau.

This is an exciting prospect for the Downtown district and it comes at a critical time as Downtown redevelopment efforts are beginning to take hold and bring in new investors. The program also provides an opportunity for the City to visibly support its Downtown businesses in its efforts to redefine its game plan and get to the work of making it happen.

It is recommended that City Council approve the contract as submitted subject to review and approval by the City Attorney. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 482-1410 or by email at ingrid@ypsilantiDDA.org if you have any questions.

Attachments: **Proposed Resolution**

Recommendation: **Approval**

For Agenda of: **May 2, 2006** **Agenda Item No.**_____

City Manager Approval:_____

Finance Director Approval:_____

City Council Action:_____