

June 14, 2016

CDBG Planning Grant Application

Information concerning the 2016/2017 CDBG Planning Grants under the Montana Department of Commerce (MDC) was distributed and discussed at the May 24, 2016 Council meeting. Applications of up to \$50,000 will be accepted on an ongoing basis beginning July 1, 2016 for long-range community development activities that have an overall community benefit. Match is on a 1:3 basis. Red Lodge has used this program in recent years for development of the Capital Improvements Program, the Preliminary Engineering Report for the Sewer Plant and for the Active Transportation Plan.

Council also discussed potential projects at the May 24th meeting including Main Street and the City pool. Consensus was to pursue the eligibility for an assessment of the City Pool. The following note was sent to the MDC on May 27th.

Could you please advise on the eligibility of the following for the CDBG Planning Grant Program:

Assessment of the City Pool

The City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for FY 2015-2019 includes a project in 2019 under the parks section for rehabilitation of the City Pool. The CIP was developed with the assistance of a CDBG Planning Grant. The pool was recently dedicated by the City Council as a permanent City park. The 2016 annual assessment of the CIP, adopted by the Council in February 2016, includes a project to conduct an assessment for rehabilitation of the pool to (1) determine feasible solutions for leakage, (2) identify needed repairs for filters and pumps, (3) recommend structural modifications to insure long-term viability, (4) identify how to improve the function and use by the public (i.e. extending the season, physical amenities, programs), and (5) develop a better cost estimate.

In sum, we are in need of developing supporting information for our project to rehabilitate the City pool.

Gus Byrom of the MDC responded that the assessment of the City Pool would not be an eligible project. In further discussion, he did note that a Main Street project, coordinated with Tash Wisemiller of the Montana Main Street Program, would be an eligible project.

The Red Lodge Montana Main Street Partnership was accepted in January 2016 as an Affiliate member of the state program. The City, The Red Lodge Area Community Foundation and the Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce, as representatives of a broad local contingent, developed the application accepted by the Montana Main Street Program. The kickoff meeting was held with Tash Wisemiller on June 2, 2016.

It was the consensus of the Red Lodge Main Street representatives that a wayfinding program would be a first suitable project that could be implemented in a relatively short period of time that could provide momentum for more longer term projects to include streetscaping and building use and redevelopment. Wayfinding can be defined as the orderly structuring of information required to enable people to comfortably and successfully access an environment. Signage, when designed in an aesthetic appropriate to the surroundings, provides an effective method to communicate wayfinding information to specific audiences. Such signage can be thought of as both a practical necessity and a public relations tool. But signage alone cannot always solve difficult wayfinding problems in man-made spaces. User-intuited wayfinding is best achieved when all the elements of landscaping, streetscapes, architecture and signage reinforce each other.

Tash Wisemiller concurred with this approach and recommended development of a wayfinding plan as a foundation for implementation of the program. Funding at 1:5 would be eligible under the annual grant cycle of the Montana Main Street Program starting August 1st. These funds can also be used as match for CDBG planning funds. Implementation funds would be eligible from the Montana Office of Tourism.

A \$20,000 project would require \$15,000 of CDBG planning grant funds and a match of \$5,000. A supplemental Main Street grant of \$5,000 could be used as match for the CDBG planning grant, requiring in the end a match of \$1,000 from the City.