

# City of Litchfield State Historic Building Grant

Program Overview for Building Owners  
April 3 and April 8, 2025

## **Summary:**

This meeting presents an overview of the City of Litchfield's new State Historic Building Grant Program for facade improvements. The 30-minute presentation was primarily made by Meghan Elliott, New History, with a "Q&A" session that followed. The presentation outlined the grant program, which provides state of Minnesota funds for the design and construction of facade improvements to buildings located in the Litchfield Commercial Historic District. The presentation was created for building owners that are interested in participating in the program. The recording is available on the City's website.

## Agenda

1. Introductions: Presenters, Councilmembers, and Members of the HPC
2. Presentation Logistics
3. Grant Program Overview
  - a) Legislation
  - b) Litchfield Commercial Historic District
  - c) Eligible Work
  - d) Grant Process
  - e) Project Timeline
4. Façade Contract
5. Q&A

### **1. Introductions:**

- a. Meghan Elliott, New History, consultant to the City of Litchfield
- b. Jillian Knight, New History, providing technical support for the presentation
- c. Emily Wood, City's attorney
- d. Dave Cziok, City Administrator. Mr. Cziok also introduced Council Members and members of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) in attendance.

- 2. Agenda Overview:** The prepared content is recorded and available on the City's website. The content covered includes the legislation, the historic district, anticipated work (and ineligible work), grant administration process, overall timeline, and an outline of the Façade Contract between building owners and the City.

## Legislation Text

With thanks to Minnesota Representative Dean Urdahl:

### **\$2,025,000**

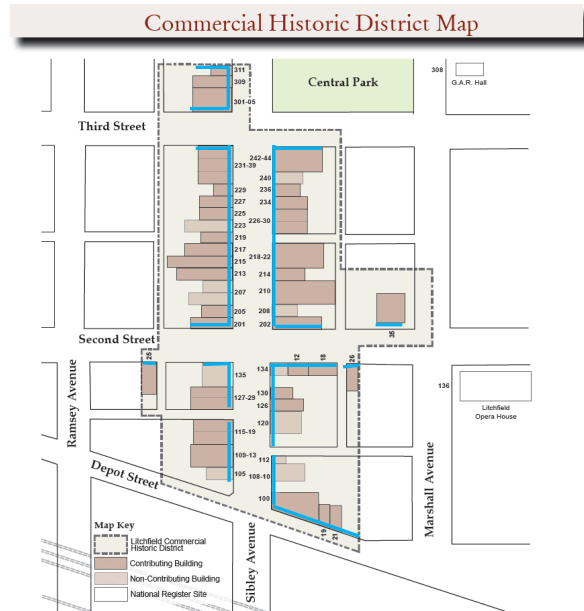
To the Minnesota Historical Society for a grant to the city of Litchfield to design and rehabilitate the facades of publicly and privately owned buildings in the commercial historic district of the city of Litchfield, consistent with the appropriate historic preservation standards and guidance for rehabilitation from the Minnesota Historical Society. The city of Litchfield may use up to four percent of this appropriation to administer the historic building facade grants and shall consult with the city's heritage preservation commission. Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.642, this appropriation is available until December 31, 2028.

**Legislation:** This program was made possible by the work, leadership, and effort of Minnesota Representative Dean Urdahl. The slide above contains the legislative text verbatim. However, key words include:

- a. "Minnesota Historical Society" (MNHS) – The money is appropriated from the state's general fund to MNHS, a state agency, and then administered to the City.
- b. "Design and rehabilitate" – The funds can be used for both design and construction.
- c. "Facades" – A façade is the front of the building that can be seen from public streets and the public right of way.
- d. "Commercial historic district" – Eligible buildings are located in the National Register of Historic Places Litchfield Commercial Historic District
- e. "Historic preservation standards" – Design and construction must follow preservation standards, also known as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- f. "Heritage preservation commission" (HPC) – The design will be reviewed by the HPC.

# Litchfield Commercial Historic District

Approx. 41 historic properties  
(c. 1882-1940)



Eligible buildings are located in the Litchfield Commercial Historic District. The slide shows the district boundaries, with primary facades noted in blue. Work on primary facades of contributing historic buildings will be prioritized by MNHS.

# Litchfield Commercial Historic District

<https://litchfieldhistory.com/preserve/national-register-of-historic-places>

NPS Form 10500  
(OCT 1996)

OMB No. 1004-0018 / 7

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See the instructions for completion of this form. For more information on the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 1545) Complete each section in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10500a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**  
Historic name Litchfield Commercial Historic District  
Other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**  
Street & number N. Sibley Ave. between Depot and 3rd Sts.  not for publication N/A  
City or town Litchfield  vicinity N/A  
State Minnesota code MI county Meecher code 092 zip code 55355

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**  
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  ineligible. (Use this only if the property is significant.)  
Signature [Signature] Date 1/17/96  
Title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Signature of commenting official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**  
I hereby certify that the property is:  
 eligible for the National Register.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] Date of action 3/1/96

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination, with a complete list of contributing buildings, can be downloaded here: [NRHP Registration Form - Litchfield Commercial Historic District](#)

Or by copying this link into your browser: <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/049b3704-d3ba-4cef-82be-4a5c03aedb42>

## Anticipated Work

“... to design and rehabilitate the facades of publicly and privately owned buildings”

### Anticipated work:

- Masonry and exterior wall repair
- Storefront repair and replacement
- Window and door repair
- Signage

### Types of improvements that are not qualified:

- Foundation repair
- Roof repair and replacement
- Work not visible from the public right-of-way
- Interior improvements
- Conversion to other uses

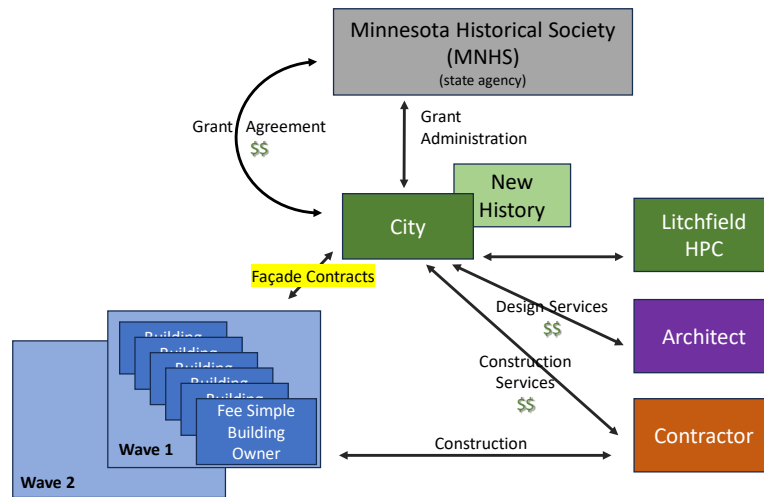
Types of Anticipated Work includes (but is not limited to):

- a. Masonry and exterior repair
- b. Storefront repair and replacement
- c. Door and window repair and replacement,
- d. Signage

Work that is very unlikely to be eligible includes:

- a. Foundation repair
- b. Roofs
- c. Interior work
- d. Work that is not visible from the public right-of-way

## Grant Process



This slide shows the flow of money for the grant funds from the state of Minnesota to the city, and ultimately into façade improvements:

- a. The grant is administered by MNHS. Funds will flow from the state via MNHS to the City. Other state agencies that are involved in the program include: Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB), the Department of Administration, and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- b. The City (center green box) is going to retain an Architect (design team) and a General Contractor (construction team) to complete the work. New History will augment City staff in implementing the grant program. Additionally, there will be a review process between the city and the Litchfield HPC.

In exchange for design and construction services, owners must enter into a Façade Contract with the city. Design and construction on will occur on multiple buildings at the same time, and there may be more than one round of work.

## Current Timeline

### 2025

- Feb-Apr: Outreach to owners
- Apr: Owner interest survey (complete by April 18)
- May-Jun: Selection of design team (Architect)
- Jun: Submittal and state approval of predesign package
- Jul: Assessment, scoping, schematic design, and initial cost estimates
- Aug-Sep: Design development, revised cost estimates, HPC review and approval
- Oct-Dec: Construction documents and final cost estimates
- Dec: Submit to Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) for review

### 2026

- Jan-Feb: Drawing revisions (as needed)
- Mar 2026: Bidding and Contractor selection
- Spring: Construction Start
- Fall: Construction Complete

The timeline is ultimately controlled by the state agencies, but a likely program timeline is:

### 2025

February to April: Outreach to owners

April: Owner interest survey (complete by April 18)

May to June: Selection of design team (Architect)

June: Submittal and state approval of required predesign package

July: Assessment, scoping, schematic design, and initial cost estimates

August to September : Design development, revised cost estimates, and HPC review and approval

October to December: Construction documents and final cost estimates

December: Submit to Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) for review

### 2026

January to February: Drawing revisions (as needed)

March: Bidding and Contractor selection via public procurement requirements

Spring: Construction Start

Fall: Construction Complete

## Façade Contract

1. Façade Contract between City and Building Owner in exchange for façade improvements completed by the City using state taxpayer dollars
2. Recorded at Meeker County for the term of the contract
3. Term is 125% of useful life of construction (likely 12-25 years)
4. **City provides:**
  - a) Design per required preservation standards
  - b) Construction (with prevailing wage)
  - c) Project management and administration
  - d) Builders risk insurance during construction
5. **Building Owner provides:**
  - a) Maintenance of completed work
  - b) Insurance for completed work
  - c) Subordination of other debt, encumbrances, and liens
  - d) 60-day notice of sale

1. Façade Contract. In exchange for improvements to their building, owners will enter into a Façade Contract with the City. This contract is similar to a façade easement or lien, but is more specific to this grant program. Key provisions include:
  - a. The façade contract will be recorded at Meeker County for the term of the contract
  - b. The term is 125% of useful life of construction (likely 12-25 years). The useful life will be determined for each building that receives work, and will be determined by the Architect for approval by the State.
  - c. The City will provide:
    - i. Design per required preservation standards;
    - ii. Construction (with prevailing wage provisions);
    - iii. Project management and administration;
    - iv. Builder's risk insurance during construction.
  - d. The Building Owner will provide:
    - i. Maintenance of completed work;
    - ii. Insurance for completed work;
    - iii. Subordination of other debt, encumbrances, and liens. This contract must be in first position, ahead of any current or future mortgage.
    - iv. 60-day notice of sale.

## Next Steps for Building Owners

1. This presentation and Q&A will be available on line on the City's website:  
<https://www.ci.litchfield.mn.us/2257/State-Historic-Building-Grant>
  - Home Page
    - ➡ Government
      - ➡ State Historic Building Grant
2. Review Façade Contract
3. Respond to online or in-person City survey by April 18, 2025

***Survey available on City's website or at City Hall:***  
***[Building Owner Survey](#)***

Full link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfNnSGFIDLKGGfuMRxBqAWg9rXdOAxr-EGR1gehskzQ-UyRIQ/viewform>

Interested building owners should complete the online owner survey. A live link to the survey is here: [Owner Survey](#)

Or, this text can be copied into your browser: <https://forms.gle/GRKdSKDZWPKzusRf9>

Hardcopies are also available at City Hall. The survey should be completed by April 18, 2025.

## Building Owner Survey

1. Contact info
2. Building Address
3. Review of grant materials (this presentation and the façade contract)
4. Description of facade
5. Proposed façade improvements
6. Past reports
7. Best-guess cost
8. Questions

Online ([google form](#)), in hardcopy at City Hall, or email [info@newhistory.com](mailto:info@newhistory.com)

The survey is very short, and should only take about 10-minutes to complete. Information requested includes:

- a. Contact information for the person completing the survey
- b. The building address
- c. A description of the façade, including which street or alley it faces
- d. Proposed work
- e. A list of any past reports completed on the façade
- f. A best-guess cost of the proposed work
- g. Any additional questions

## Q&A

1. Unmute
2. Chat function
3. Email: [info@newhistory.com](mailto:info@newhistory.com) (*from today until April 11, 2025*)

Presentation, Façade Contract Template, and “Q&A” will be posted on the city’s website

The “Questions and Answers” (Q&A) will be compiled for both presentations, as well as any questions received by email prior to April 11, 2025. The Q&A will be posted to the City’s website under Home Page – Government – State Historic Building Grant. A live link is [here](#).