



**Downtown Reading
Façade Improvement Grant Program**

>>Exterior Property Improvements<<

>>Lighting<<

>>Signage<<

>>Storefront Window Display<<

2020

Managed By



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PROGRAM GOALS:

The Downtown Facade Improvement Program is made possible through funding from the Berks Alliance and is managed by the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance. The program seeks to:

- Improve the external appearance, lighting and security of storefronts
- Enhance the attractiveness of Downtown Reading
- Preserve and restore historic properties
- Encourage economic development and leverage additional private investment

AVAILABLE FUNDING:

100% owner match: maximum grant of up to \$10,000 for exterior painting, metals, masonry, windows doors – owner must match dollar for dollar. (i.e. \$10,000 request = \$10,000 owner contribution for a \$20,000+ total project cost)

50% owner match: maximum grant up to \$5,000 for signs, awnings, and exterior lighting – owner must match at least 50% of the cost. (i.e. \$5,000 request = \$2,500 owner contribution for a \$7,500+ total project cost)

ELIGIBILITY:

In order to be eligible for grant or loan funding as part of the Façade Improvement Program an applicant and its proposed project and property must meet all of the following criteria:

- A property must be located in the target area for priority consideration in this program (See map on page 12)
- Priority consideration given to ground floor retail or commercial use – the project must enhance and improve the physical appearance of the structure from the public right-of-way.
- The total cost for the project must be at least \$500.
- The Applicant must show proof of matching funds prior to receiving approval for a grant.
- The Applicant must be the property and/or business owner of the property.
 - Business owners require written permission from the property owner.
 - Property and Business owners may collaborate to improve a property.
- The Applicant must be ready to proceed with improvements within the 2020 calendar year.
- The property must be free from any governmental liens.
- The project proposal, as set forth in this Application (and any attachments hereto), must comply with all applicable zoning, building/trades, historic preservation and other laws and regulations of all governmental entities having jurisdiction over the owner, the project and/or the project property.
- NOTE: Beginning a project prior to approval will be grounds for funding disqualification.

PROJECT TYPES

Exterior Painting, Metals and Masonry (100% match)

- Refers to the repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, restoration or replacement of exterior woodwork, sheet metal and cast-iron elements.
- Exterior masonry repairs such as stairways, retaining walls and walkways. (Re)pointing, (re)painting and appropriate recommended cleaning to all masonry/brick or stonework that is attached to the property facade and restoration of planting areas damaged or removed during reconstruction.

Architectural Elements/Windows and Doors (100% match)

- Refers to the repair, replacement, installation, painting or restoration of windows (including display, ornamental, and upper-story windows), shutters and exterior doors as part of storefront or residential entrance ways and includes repair, replacement, installation, painting or restoration of cornices, parapets, soffits, porches or roofs when part of a façade. Compatible ADA exterior elements are also eligible under the grant.

Signs and Awnings (50% match)

- Maintenance of existing business signage and awnings, as well as the installation of new business signage and awnings (with some exceptions). This category includes lighting fixtures that provide direct lighting on signage or provide area lighting under awnings.

Exterior Lighting (50% match)

- Maintenance and repair of or addition of exterior lighting to building facades. Exterior façade lighting can be mounted to the building façade and to provide lighting for the facade of the existing building structure. Please see Appendix for examples of desired lighting projects.

Storefront Window Display (50% match)

- Professional consulting assistance to reimagine and improve storefront window display.

GRANT RESTRICTIONS:

The following types of projects and facilities will not be considered for funding:

- Facilities such as community halls, fire stations, hospitals, colleges or universities
- Properties owned by the City, State or Federal Government
- Buildings with uses that are not recognized and permitted by the City's Zoning Office, *Permitted uses include non-conforming uses that pre-date the Zoning Ordinance or a specific amendment to the ordinance, uses by ZHB relief, and uses staff processed as being permitted by right as per the Zoning Ordinance.*

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS:

Please note that the Program will be implemented on a competitive basis and eligible projects. All completed applications received will date stamped as they are received. Applications will be reviewed and scored by the Downtown Reading Façade Review Committee.

AWARD AND DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS:

The Exec. Dir. Of Downtown Revitalization will notify each Applicant in writing as to the Committee's determination regarding its Application. Following approval and notification from the Downtown Reading Façade Review Committee must be completed by December 31, 2020. If you are unable to complete your project within the allotted time given, The Downtown Reading Façade Review Committee has the right to rescind any offer to those believed to be non-compliant as described in Non-Compliance section of this application.

Award checks will be released once the owner or responsible party has shown receipts, contractor draws or other documentation showing that 50% of the total cost of the project or matching funds have been spent. Checks will be received within three weeks of providing the necessary documentation. The balance will be released after completion of the project.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until Friday, September 25, 2020.

NON-COMPLIANCE:

The Eligibility section of this Application stipulates that all projects must be completed within the calendar year following notification to the Applicant and the Applicants receipt of all the required permits from City departments, offices or agencies. If you are deemed non-compliant, The Downtown Reading Façade Review Committee will have no choice but to rescind the loan award and offer funds to others who are in a better position to begin improvements.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTORS:

- Must be licensed to work in the State of PA
- Must be licensed to work in the City of Reading

CERTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Applicant acknowledges, certifies, represents, warrants and agrees to, as applicable, the following in connection with Applicant's submission of this Application and, as applicable, Applicant's ultimate receipt and acceptance of any disbursement under a program grant or loan:

1. All information contained in this Application is true and correct as of the date hereof and Applicant's proposed project satisfies all of the criteria set forth in the Eligibility section hereinabove. Should any information contained herein subsequently become untrue or incorrect, Applicant shall have a duty to promptly inform the Downtown Reading Façade Review Committee in writing via Aaron Gantz, with specificity, as to that item or those items of information which are no longer true and correct and explaining the state of facts giving rise to such change.
2. Any funds disbursed to the Applicant pursuant to a grant award made to the Applicant shall be used solely for the project described in the application for the grant or loan.
3. Applicant's receipt and acceptance of any disbursement made under a program grant or loan shall constitute Applicant's acceptance of any and all agreements and obligations imposed upon Applicant herein.
4. The Applicant's project, as set forth in this application (and any attachments hereto), shall comply with all applicable zoning, historic preservation, building/trades regulations, and other laws and regulations of all governmental entities having jurisdiction over the owner, the project and/or the property. Applicant acknowledges and agrees that the determination to award a loan or grant to the Applicant for the Applicant's project shall not constitute any judgment by, or opinion of, Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and/or the City of Reading that the Applicant's project complies with applicable law. Applicant acknowledges and agrees that Applicant shall have sole responsibility for ensuring that its project complies with applicable law, and shall not rely, nor be entitled to rely, upon any approvals, awards, grants, determinations or representations of the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and/or the City regarding its project's compliance with applicable law. For information on how to obtain City building permits, please contact Reading Building and Trades, 610-655-6284.
5. Applicant and Applicant's Project does not discriminate in any manner on the basis of race, creed, marital status, color, sex, age, religion, national origin or sexual preference, or physical handicap, as required by the laws of the United States and the State of Pennsylvania.

Signature _____

Date _____

BERKS ALLIANCE
DOWNTOWN READING FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT + APPLICANT INFORMATION

Address of Property for which Funds are Requested:

Property/Business Owner's Name:

Property Owner's Address:

Business Phone Number(s):

Email Address:

Estimated Total Project Cost:

Grant Amount Requested:

Loan Amount Requested:

Owner Contribution:

Anticipated Date of Project Commencement:

Anticipated Date of Project Completion:

Project Scope:

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

The following materials are included in this application form and must be completed and submitted as part of the application:

- ☐ Signed certification and acknowledgement (See page 5).
- ☐ Grant Application (See page 6).
- ☐ A detailed description of the proposed façade improvement project (See page 6 - include additional pages as necessary).
- ☐ If the property is located within the Callowhill or Prince Historic District:
 - HARB Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application (See page 11)

In addition to the items above, the following additional materials must be submitted:

- ☐ At least two bids from different contractors for the specific work that you are requesting reimbursement
- ☐ City of Reading Zoning Permit or Occupancy Permit
- ☐ Current financial statement (within 90 days) – proof of matching funds
- ☐ A Copy of the Applicant's deed vesting title in the Project property (or written evidence confirming that the property owner has given permission to the applicant [if a tenant] to physically alter the property).

Submit Completed Application to:

Electronic submissions preferred: Aaron Gantz AGantz@GreaterReading.org

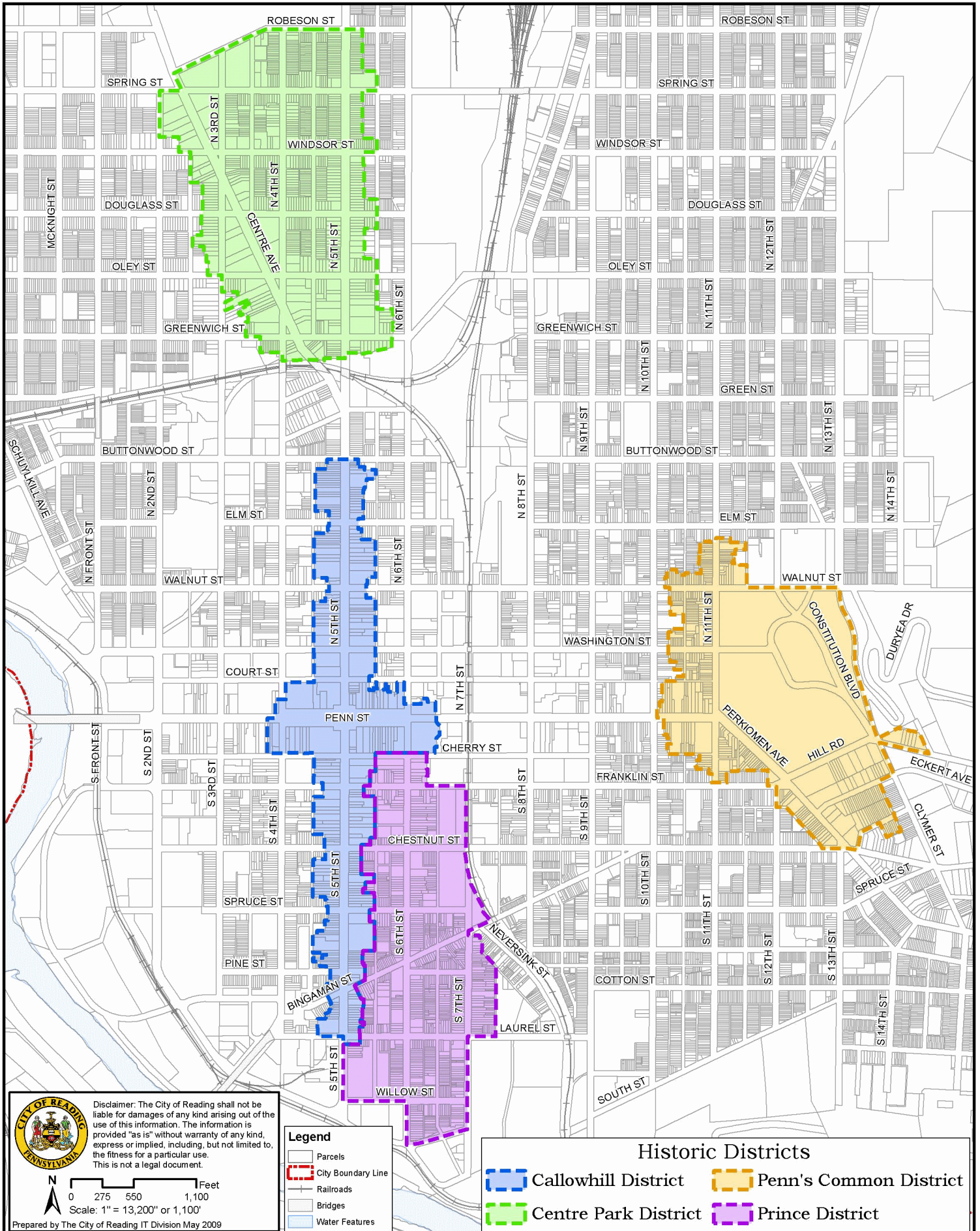
or Mail to:

Greater Reading Chamber Alliance
606 Court Street
Reading, PA 19601

Attention: Aaron Gantz, Executive Director of Downtown Revitalization

APPENDIX

City of Reading, PA - Historic Districts



APPENDIX II - HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required for all exterior alterations, demolitions, new construction, and additions to properties in a regulated historic or conservation district. The application must be completed and include:

- all specifications for proposed exterior work
- photographs of existing conditions
- product data
- dimensioned plan
- elevation, and detail drawings
- paint color samples
- material samples.

Incomplete applications cannot be reviewed until the applicant has submitted all required supporting documentation. Certificate of Appropriateness applications must be submitted to the Preservation Officer no later than 10 business days before the next regularly scheduled meeting (3rd Tues of each month). A COA is required before other permits can be obtained.

The Preservation Officer is authorized to approve certain minor in-kind building improvements and painting of exterior surfaces. Most proposed improvements, however, will require review by the HARB as per the Historical and Conservation Districts Ordinance. Some improvements that can be approved by the Preservation Officer may be approved with your Downtown Reading Façade program Application.

[COA Applications](#) and [COA Checklists](#) are available on ReadingPA.gov or at the City's Historic Preservation Office at City Hall Room 2-09, 815 Washington Street Reading, PA 19601

COA Application Process:

1. An application for a COA is submitted for review by the Preservation Officer.
2. The Preservation Officer may approve the COA application as authorized or shall forward the application to the HARB for review at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting. It is strongly recommended that the applicant or a representative attend the meeting.
3. If approved by the HARB (with or without conditions), a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued and then Building Permits can be obtained. A COA will be sent to you the applicant in approximately 2 weeks.
4. If a COA is denied by the HARB, the applicant may appeal the decision of the HARB to City Council.

If City Council approves the application (with or without conditions), a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued and then Building Permits can be obtained. If City Council denies your appeal, a Certificate of Appropriateness is NOT issued and then Building Permits can NOT be obtained. Revisions to the design and resubmittal of a new application are necessary for the project to be reviewed again by the HARB.

Additional information about façade projects in the historic districts can be found at <https://www.readingpa.gov/content/regulations-alterations>.

**READING BOARD OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION**

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT OR AGENT: _____
(Please sign and print your name)

DISTRICT: Callowhill _____ Centre Park _____ Prince _____ Penn's Common _____
Heights Conservation District _____

PROPERTY ADDRESS: _____

PROPERTY OWNER: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

OWNER ADDRESS: _____

APPLICANT MAILING ADDRESS: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS:

Describe proposed project (materials, colors, dimensions, etc.). Attach separate sheet if necessary.

Name of contractor: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ License #: _____

SIGNS:

For signs submit the following:

Sign dimensions: _____ Letter dimensions: _____

Drawing : _____ Color samples: _____ Illumination: _____

Sign location: _____

Sign maker: _____ Telephone: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR REVIEW:

Construction drawings _____ Building elevation _____

Photograph of building _____ Color / material samples _____

APPROVED: _____

Historic Preservation Specialist

Date

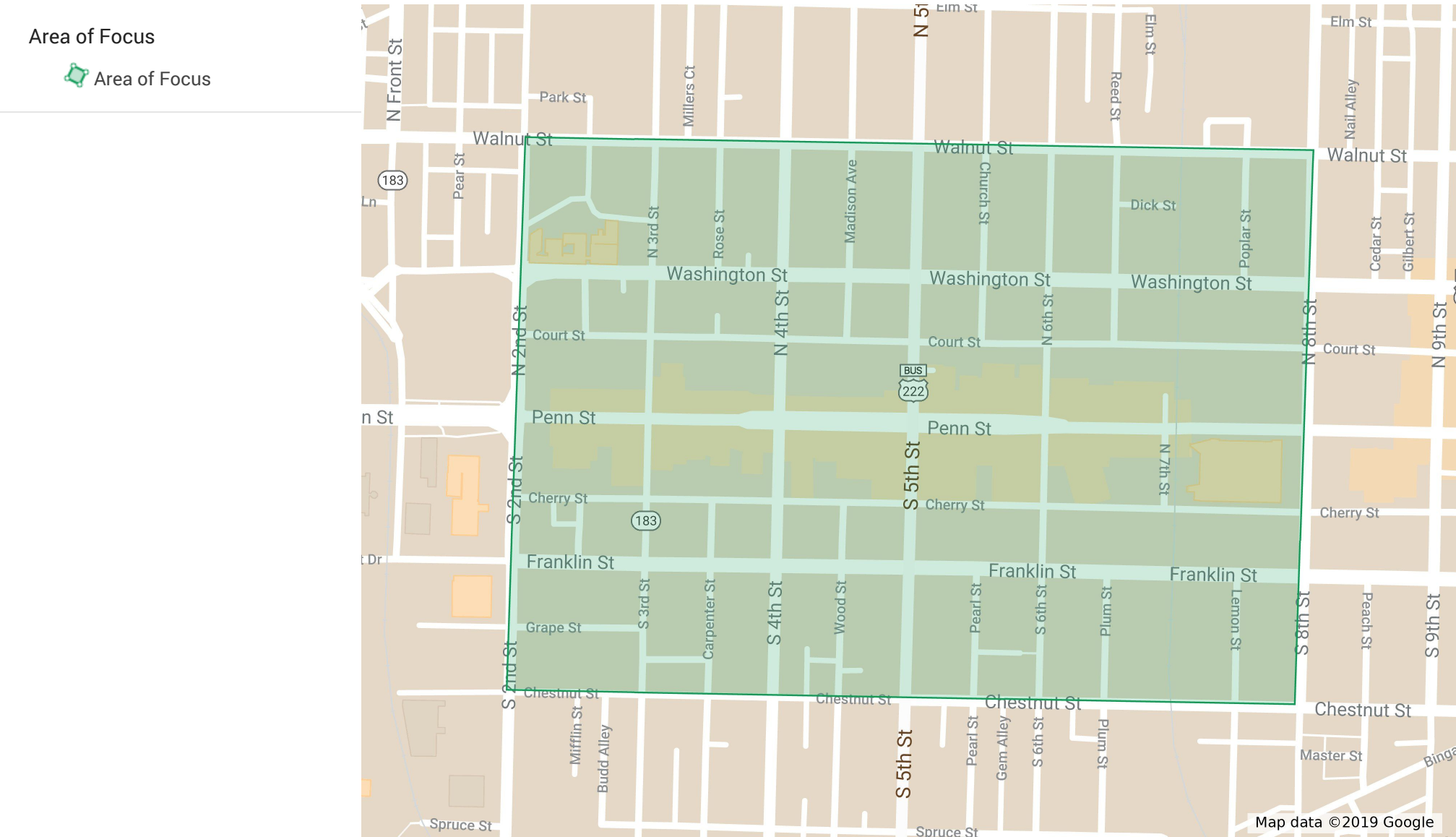
PROJECT MUST BE REVIEWED BY THE HARB G

The Reading Board of Historical Architectural Review meets on a regular basis on the third Tuesday of every month in the **Penn Room, First Floor, City Hall, 815 Washington Street, Reading, PA, 19601**. Applications must be made at least ten working days prior to the monthly meeting. For questions please call (610) 655-6326.

Next meeting: 6:30 p.m. in City Hall on Tuesday, _____ 20_____

Return application by: _____

Downtown Reading Facade Map



APPENDIX V – LIGHTING EXAMPLES

