

DOWNTOWN CHARM GRANT PROGRAM

**Downtown Charm Grant Program
City of Calais**

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assessor@calaismaine.org

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I. PROGRAM SUMMARY

City of Calais has established a Façade and Building Improvement Grant Program, Downtown Charm Grant Program, to provide financial assistance to downtown business and property owners located within the established Downtown District (see attached map) who wish to make physical improvements to the exterior of their buildings.

A Façade Improvement Grant may be used for a variety of façade improvement activities, including painting, window or door repairs or replacements, signage, awnings, storefront restorations, and other activities outlined under the “Eligible Activities” section of this application package.

A Special Projects & Building Improvement Grant may be utilized for improvements to a building’s structure as well as critical economic development and redevelopment projects.

II. FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION

Funding for Downtown Charm Grant Program will come from a variety of public and private sources, including but not limited to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds, donations, and grants. The administration of the Downtown Charm Grant Program (DCGP) will be carried out by the Downtown Charm Committee recommendation to the City of Calais Council according to the procedures and guidelines outlined in this document. The administration and operation of this program shall conform to all federal, state, and local codes.

III. PROGRAM GUIDELINES & ELIGIBILITY

1. Three categories of Downtown Charm Grant Program will be offered:

(1) Small Projects Grants up to \$2,500. (Examples of “small projects” include signs, awnings, small paint projects, etc.)

(2) Façade Improvement Grants up to \$10,000.

(3) Special Projects and Building Improvements (case-by-case basis) Capped at \$15,000.

2. Grants are available for **up to 50% of the actual or estimated cost** of the improvement project and therefore must be matched at a ratio of 1:1. **PLEASE NOTE:** The amount of grant fund reimbursement shall be up to 50% of the actual total UNLESS the actual total is greater

than the estimated total, in which case the grant fund reimbursement shall be up to 50% of the estimated total provided in the grant application.

3. Each applicant may only be awarded one grant in each category. *Recipients of Small Projects Grants will still be eligible to apply for Façade Improvement Grants; however, the maximum Façade Improvement Grant award for a Small Projects Grant recipient will be \$10,000 minus the amount of the Small Project Grant.* (Example: if Joe Smith receives a \$2,500 Small Projects Grant, she will be eligible for a Façade Improvement Grant up to \$7,500.)

4. The grant applicant may be the property owner or the tenant. A tenant must have the property owner's signed approval of the proposed building improvement.

5. A Façade Improvement Grant may only be made to a commercial or mixed-use property located within the defined Downtown District (see map). Please note that properties are eligible for grant funding regardless of occupancy, though a business recruitment plan must be identified and described in the grant application.

6. Applicants who have been awarded a Façade Improvement Grant from a previous round of funding, but have yet to complete the improvements or submit for reimbursement, will not be considered eligible until the original project has been completed.

7. Proposals will be ranked by the following structure; First priority will be given to applicants or sites that have not previously received funding from this program. Secondary priority will go to sites or applicants who have previously completed a successful improvement project through this funding source. Priority will not be given to previous awardees who are yet to complete their originally proposed project.

8. New Applicants and/or Project Sites that have never received funding through this program will receive a bonus point in scoring.

9. Businesses & Entrepreneurs looking to open or expand into Calais by improving the façade of a previously vacant/closed space will receive a bonus point in scoring.

10. Projects utilizing State of Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) funding must be reviewed by a certified design professional, who will provide concept sketches and assist with securing approval from Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

11. **REIMBURSEMENT:** The applicant will be **reimbursed** for the amount of the grant award only upon completion of the project. Reimbursement will not be made for work completed prior to grant application acceptance. Please see “Section VI. Application Process & Timeline” for more details.

12. Compliance with design standards as suggested in the Design Guidelines attached to the end of this packet.

13. All projects must be completed by a time limit that is set by the DCGP committee, unless special arrangements are made and approved by DCGP. Approved “Special Projects & Building Improvements” may be subject to an extended special consideration deadline as determined in concert with the DCGP Committee.

14. DCGP reserves the right to utilize project illustrations and images (prior to and after work is completed) for the purposes of marketing and/or branding.

IV. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Use of grant funds is restricted to eligible improvements to the exterior of buildings/structures. Eligible activities are listed below. Because it is likely that façade improvement requests will exceed the available funds, activities have been categorized as either High Priority or Low Priority. In general, DCGP will seek to fund High Priority activities before providing assistance for Low Priority activities.

Eligible Activities – High Priority:

- Signage (*The Design Guidelines strongly encourage perpendicular signage. See the Design Guidelines attached to the end of this packet for additional information.*)
- Awnings
- Storefront Improvements
- Restoration of original/historical windows, doors, and trim where possible
- Repair or replacement of windows, doors, and trim
- Cleaning and/or painting of wood surfaces
- Cleaning and/or repointing of surface brick or stone
- Re-painting of brick, stone or cement
- Removing paint from brick or stone
- Exterior lighting
- Outdoor seating
- Streetscaping improvements
- Removal of “modernization” efforts and/or inappropriate non-historic alterations/additions

- Murals and Art & Design Elements
- Improvements visible from the Concourse parking area

Eligible Activities – Low Priority:

- Cleaning and repair or installation of approved siding
- Roofing visible from street-level
- Removal or repair of fire escapes
- Landscaping
- Screening for trash receptacles
- Security cameras
- Interior lighting

Ineligible Activities:

- Purchase of commercial property/equipment
- New construction
- Renovations started prior to approval for grant

V. DOWNTOWN CHARM GRANT PROGRAM COMMITTEE

1. The DCGP Committee will include one member from the City of Calais Council, one member from the City of Calais Planning Board, the Economic Development Director, one member from the Calais Downtown Revitalization Committee, and one Calais Resident Volunteer. The City Manager and Code Enforcement Officer would advise the Committee, but due to conflicts cannot be on the Committee.
2. The DCGP Committee will give recommendations to the City of Calais Council for final approval.

VI. APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINE

1. ***To apply for a Façade & Building Improvement Grant, fill out the attached form and return it to the Code Enforcement Officer or City Manager by the appropriate deadline.*** Please be sure to include any available drawings and descriptive information on the design of the project and products to be used. You must also provide both material and labor cost estimates for each item. (See the attached form for more details).
2. The Downtown Charm Grant Program Committee will review and score each application and will make announcements of awards on June 29th, 2026.
3. Successful applicants may begin improvements any time after receiving official grant award notification. ***No improvements begun prior to award notification will be eligible for reimbursement.***

4. Upon completion of a Façade Improvement Grant project, the business/property owner shall submit paid bills/invoices for the work to DCGP, as well as photographic evidence of the completed work; these documents should be e-mailed to assessor@calaismaine.org. DCGP and/or the Code Enforcement Officer or City Manager will then perform an inspection to determine that the work was completed in accordance with the original grant application and cost estimates.

5. Reimbursement will be processed within 2-4 weeks upon satisfactory inspection. Reimbursement will be made in the form of a mailed check; mail delivery time will further extend the reimbursement timeline.

VII. SELECTION CRITERIA

Mandatory Criteria

DCGP Applicant Checklist (Incomplete applications will not be scored):	
___	Completed DCGP Grant Application Form (and any available photos, design sketches, &/or cost estimates)
___	Completed DCGP Budget Form
___	Signed DCGP Applicant Agreement and Disclosure Statement
___	Comply with the Required DCGP Program and Design Guidelines.

Scored Criteria

Each Façade and Building Improvement Grant Program application will be scored according to the following criteria:

01. Compliance with the Design Guidelines *(15 points)*
02. Potential impact on the attractiveness of the building/business *(15 points)*
03. Priority of eligible activity *(20 points)*
04. Potential impact on the attractiveness of the downtown streetscape as a whole *(25 points)*
05. Financial feasibility *(10 points)*
06. Long-term value/viability/project endurance *(15 points)*

DCGP anticipates that there will be more demand than available funds. Funding will be provided to those applications receiving the overall highest scores until the grant fund is exhausted. The Downtown Charm Grant Program Committee reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant who does not comply with the required or suggested design guidelines. Should there be a lack of qualified applications, all remaining grant funds may not be awarded.

Required Design Guidelines

1. Planned improvements must preserve the architectural integrity of the building and adhere, where possible, to the original design of the façade. Improvements must not replace historic elements with modern ones.
2. Only appropriate means of cleaning buildings will receive funding. Sandblasting of historic buildings is inappropriate due to its destructive nature.
3. Vinyl and aluminum siding are inappropriate materials for covering historic structures and the use of those and similar inappropriate façade coverings will not be funded.

VIII. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Recipients of the Downtown Charm Grant Program agree to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal rules, laws, and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, adherence to the Land Use Codes, the Building and Property Maintenance Ordinance, and the Business District Revitalization Ordinance. Compliance with these regulations ensures that all projects align with the legal and community standards established to promote sustainable and responsible development within the district.

IX. FEDERAL FUNDING & LABOR STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

Federal Labor Standards are statutory provisions dealing with construction projects, including façade improvements that receive federal funds such as the CDBG Community Enterprise funds. Contracts in excess of \$2,000 which employ craftsmen, mechanics and/or laborers for construction-related activities shall contain provisions with respect to minimum wages and fringe benefits set by the federal Department of Labor, also known as Davis-Bacon wages. In general, if grant funds are used solely to purchase materials and/or for contracts less than \$2,000, the federal labor standards may not apply. If it appears that labor standards may be applicable, City of Calais will provide assistance in planning the use of labor and materials so that any compliance requirements can be kept to a minimum.

X. AMENDMENT

With the use of the DCGP Funding, program guidelines, and eligibility may be amended upon final approval of the DCGP Committee and City of Calais Council. All amendments to program guidelines and eligibility shall be pursuant to all state and federal regulations, which may apply to activities covered by this program.

**Downtown Charm Grant Program - Grant Application
Downtown Calais, ME**

Due June 15th, 2026

I. DCGP Application

DCGP Grant Application		
1. Name of Applicant / Grantee:		
2. Please check one:	Landlord ()	Tenant ()
3. Have you or any prior business you have owned, ever received a revolving loan from the City of Calais?	Yes	No
4. Have you received prior local, state, federal, and/ or private sector grant funding for your building (e.g. Community Dev. Block Grant)?	Yes, Grant Name(s) & Year(s)	No
5. Have you previously applied to DCGP?	Yes	No
5a. If yes, were you awarded funding?	Yes	No
5b. If awarded funding, did you complete the project as described in your application?	Yes	No
6. Business Name, if applicable:		
7. Number of Employees, if applicable:		
8. Property Address:		
9. Is your property on the National Historical Registry?	Yes, Reference Number:	No
10. Is your building vacant? (Y/N) If so, how will this grant facilitate business recruitment?		
11. Mailing Address (if different from above):		
12. Contact Information:	Phone	
13. Contact Information:	Email	
14. Grant Request Amount:	\$	

15. Planned Improvements (Please check all that apply.)

(1) High Program Priority

<input type="checkbox"/> Awning	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning &/or repointing of surface brick or stone
<input type="checkbox"/> Signage	<input type="checkbox"/> Re-painting of brick, stone, or cement
<input type="checkbox"/> Storefront Improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> Removing paint from brick or stone
<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration of historical/original windows, doors, &/or trim where possible	<input type="checkbox"/> Removal of “modernization efforts” &/or inappropriate non-historical alterations/additions
<input type="checkbox"/> Repair or replacement of windows, doors, &/or trim	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning &/or painting of exterior surfaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Mural &/or Art & Design Elements
<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Seating (e.g. bench)	<input type="checkbox"/> Streetscaping improvements (e.g. designated crosswalks)

(2) Low Program Priority Activities

<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning and repair or installation of approved siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning &/or painting of interior surfaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Security Cameras	<input type="checkbox"/> Roofing visible from street-level
<input type="checkbox"/> Interior lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Screening for trash receptacles
<input type="checkbox"/> Removal or repair of fire escapes	

16. Please provide a brief written description of each proposed activity.

For example: (1) Painting – Paint entire street façade with 3 colors, a base wall color, a trim color and an accent color. (2) Sign – Remove existing internally illuminated sign and replace with a new projecting externally illuminated sign. (3) Install a new awning at main entry.

additional space provided on next page

17. To complement the written description, please attach a photo(s) and/or design sketch(es) to help the Committee understand where each proposed activity will take place and/or what it might look like. A completed design is not necessary.

18. Please describe the estimated project timeline for project completion as well as the long-term maintenance plan that will be in place to protect the façade improvements.

<p>Start Date: End Date: Timeline description:</p> <p>Long-term maintenance plan:</p>
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19. Which fund are you applying for? (check all that apply)

- Small Projects Grants (up to \$2,500)
- Façade Improvement Grant (up to \$10,000)
- Special Projects & Building Improvement (Capped at \$15,000)

20. Estimated Cost* of Improvements: _____

**Using the attached Budget Form. A formal bid is not required at this stage.*

21. Total Project Amount: _____

22. Applicant's Signature

I have read and understand the attached guidelines. I understand that this is a matching grant program, and that money is granted on a reimbursement basis, following completion of work. I also understand that improvements not formally approved by the Façade & Building Improvement Advisory Committee will not be funded.

Applicant's Signature

Date

23. Landlord's Acknowledgement (if Applicant is a Tenant)

I am the landlord of the above address, I have been informed of the Applicant's intention to perform the improvements described in the attached documentation, and I hereby approve the proposed improvements.

Landlord's Signature

Date

24. Landlord's Contact Information

Landlord's Full Name: _____

Landlord's Address: _____

Landlord's Email: _____

Landlord's Phone: _____

II. Applicant Agreement and Disclosure Statement:

By signing and submitting this application, the applicant hereby agrees to the following:

1. The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge. I understand that this information is being submitted to the DCGP Committee so that they can decide to make a grant and that the DCGP Committee is relying on this information. I give permission to DCGP to research the building's history, research the applicant's history, contact respective financial institutions, and perform other related activities necessary for the reasonable evaluation of this proposal.

2. I give permission to DCGP to utilize project illustrations and images for the purposes of marketing and/or branding.

3. I (we) have read, understand, and agree to comply with the requirements and conditions of City of Calais's Downtown Charm Grant Program and hereby agree to comply with the DCGP Program Guidance document.

4. I have not paid anyone employed by the City of Calais or DCGP Committee Members to help in obtaining this grant.

5. I acknowledge that any work commenced before grant approval by the DCGP Committee, and a signed grant agreement is an unallowable expense and will not be reimbursed by DCGP. I understand that this is a matching grant program, and that money is granted on a reimbursement basis, following completion of work. I also understand that improvements not formally approved by DCGP will not be funded.

6. I understand that the project must be completed as agreed by that is set by the DCGP committee, or as extended in writing as necessitated by extenuating conditions. Approved projects within the category of "Special Projects & Building Improvement" may be eligible for an extended timeline as determined in consultation with the DCGP Committee.

7. I agree and acknowledge that: (a) the acceptance of this application does not commit DCGP to enter into an agreement, to pay any costs incurred in its preparation to participate in subsequent negotiations, or to contract for the project; (b) the acceptance of this application does not constitute an agreement by DCGP that any contract will be entered into by DCGP or that any application shall be granted; (c) DCGP expressly reserves the right, in its sole discretion and for any reason, to reject any or all applications (whether or not an application meets the guidelines, criteria, or other grant requirements) or to request more information from the applicant; (d) all decisions of DCGP, including whether to accept or reject an application, are final, non-reviewable and non-appealable, and the undersigned applicant waives any and all claims, including without limitation, claims for damage or loss, against DCGP, its agents, employees, officers, or others acting on its behalf in connection with this grant program, arising out of or related to the grant process, including without limitation, any claims that a rejected application should have been granted.

8. Should assistance be provided, I agree:

- a. To comply with all applicable provisions of federal statutes and regulations concerning equal employment opportunities for persons engaged in rehabilitation work undertaken in connection with program assistance.
- b. To keep such records as may be required by DCGP in connection with the work to be assisted.

c. To not discriminate upon the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, religion or national origin in the sale, lease, rental, use or occupancy of the property to be assisted.

d. To allow no member of the governing body of DCGP to have any interest, direct or indirect, in the proceeds of any loan or in any way contract entered into by the borrower for the performance of work financed, in whole or in part, with the proceeds of the loan.

e. That NO financial assistance will be provided if the project involves the permanent and involuntary displacement of tenants unless the applicant agrees to provide financial assistance to the tenants at levels consistent with the Federal Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act, as amended. Such assistance granted will not, however, be counted in the private match requirement.

9. Upon conclusion of the facade improvements, I agree to maintain the completed project. I understand there will be no alterations of the completed work without approval from DCGP.

10. I certify that there are no liens other than mortgages against this applicant's property and that all payments to municipal, state, and federal governments are current.

11. The word "I" shall refer to the undersigned applicant, and shall include any corporate or entity applicant.

A. Printed Property Owner Name*: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Property Owner* Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Owner as determined by the City of Calais Tax Assessor's Office

B. Printed Business Owner/Tenant

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Business Owner/Tenant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Business License #: _____

C. If applicant is a Corporation, sign below:

Corporate Name and Seal _____ Date: _____

Witnessed By: _____ Date: _____

Please send your completed application along with all documentation to City of Calais at assessor@calaismaine.org.

1. Small Projects Grant applications are due by 5 pm on June 15th, 2026. Notice of award will be June 29th, 2026.
2. Façade Improvement Grant applications are due by 5 pm on June 15th, 2026. Notice of award will be June 29th, 2026.
3. Special Projects & Building Improvement Grant applications are due by 5 pm on June 15th, 2026. Notice of award will be June 29th, 2026.

Applications must be electronically emailed to DCGP.

Additional Contact Information:

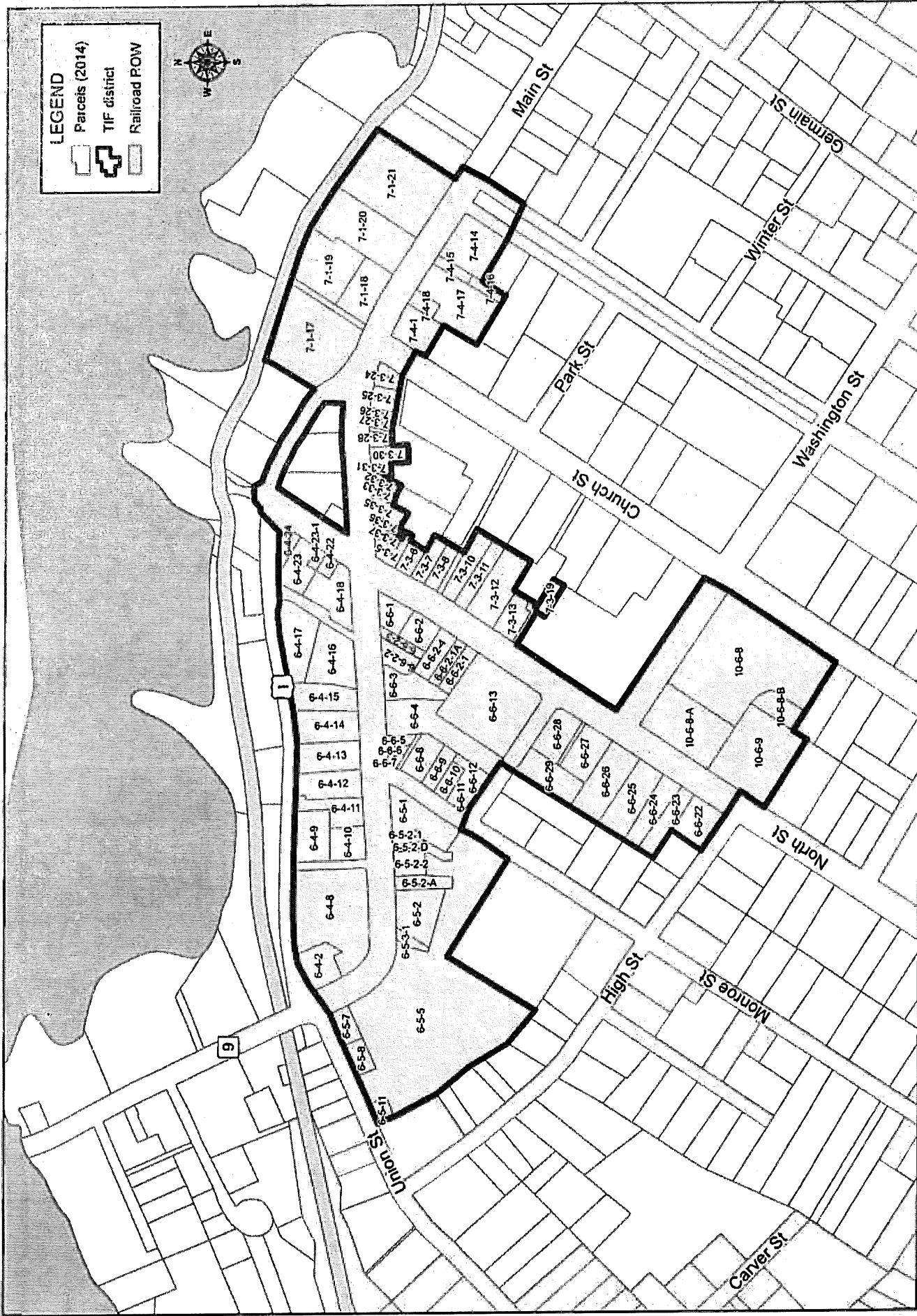
City of Calais
11 Church Street
Calais, ME 04901

Email: assessor@calaismaine.org

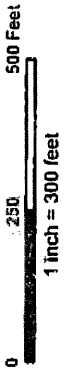
Phone: 207-454-2521

**DOWNTOWN CHARM GRANT PROGRAM
PROJECT BUDGET FORM**

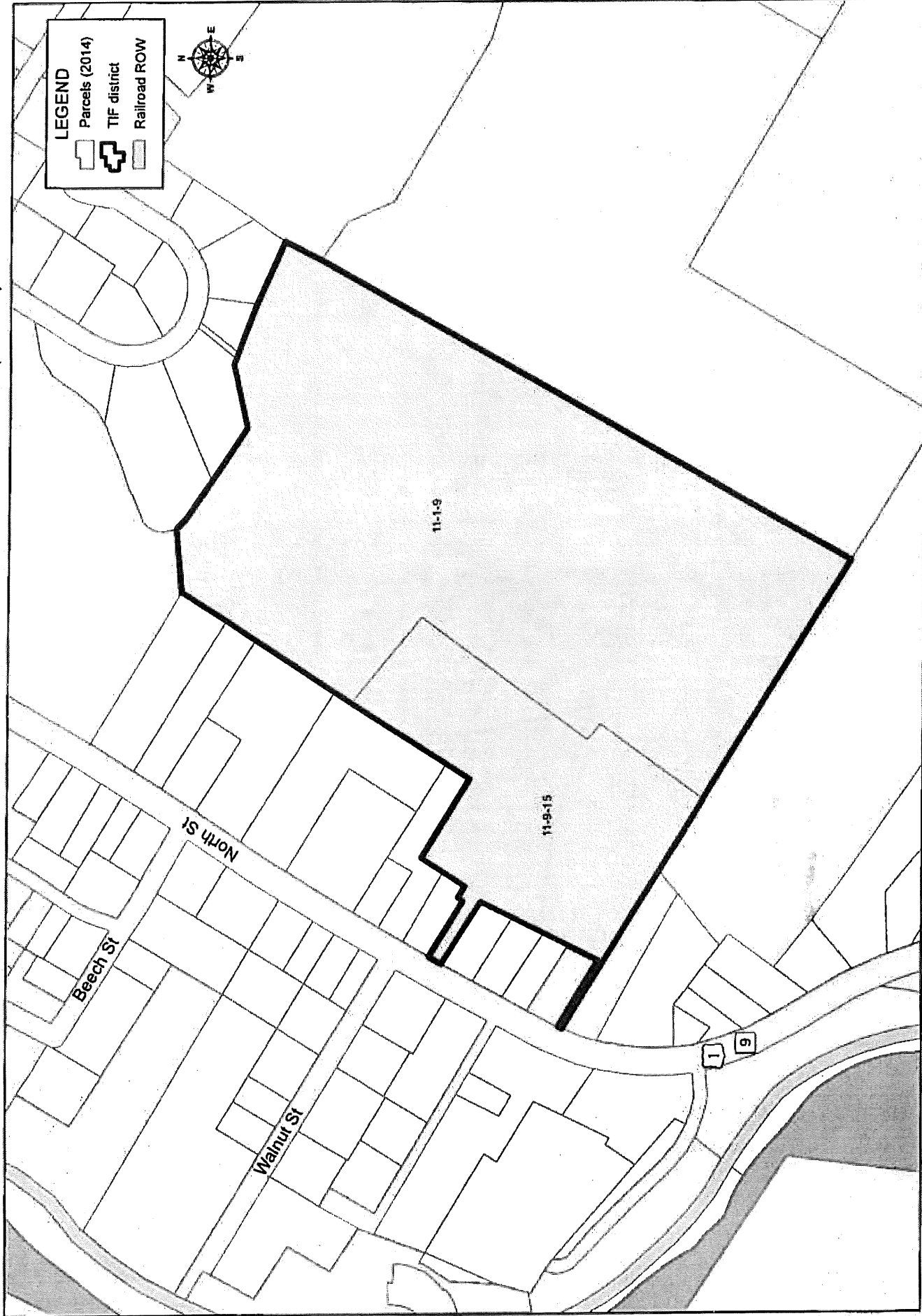
DCGP Project Budget – please submit with application form.			
DESCRIPTION OF IMPROVEMENTS (Please break down by activity, such as painting, sign, awning, etc.)	Grantee Amount	DCGP Amount	TOTAL COST
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
TOTAL			
Total Project Cost			



Map created: January 2017
 Map prepared by Lettman Long LLC
 Sources: Town of Calais, MEDOT and MEGIS

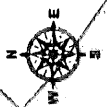


Calais Downtown TIF District: Tract 1



LEGEND

- Parcels (2014)
- TIF district
- Railroad ROW



Map created January, 2017
 Map prepared by LetLong Logic, LLC
 Sources: Town of Calais, MEDOT and MEGIS



Calais Downtown TIF District: Tract 2

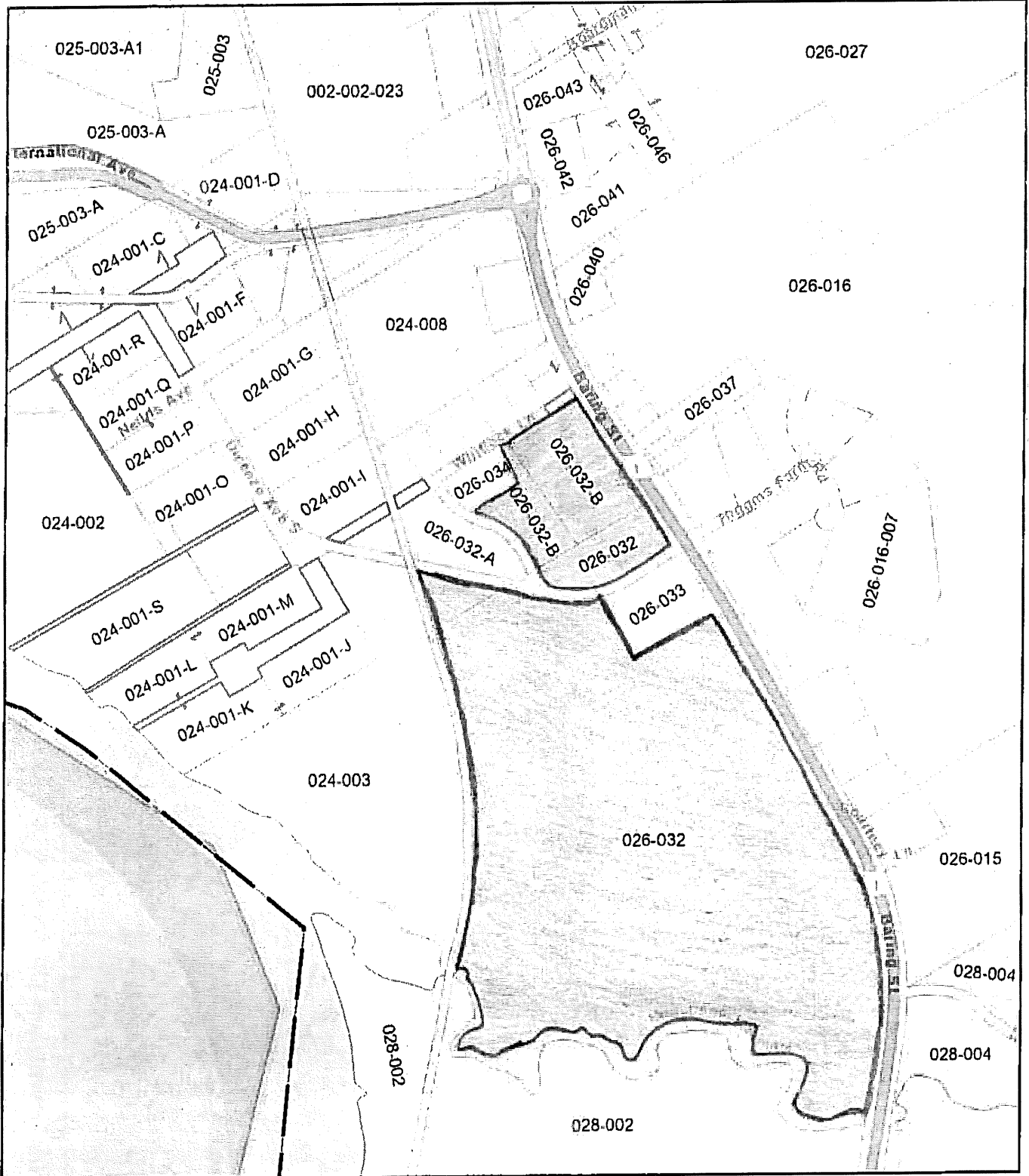


Properties added in Amd-1

Calais, ME

1 inch = 531 Feet

www.cai-tech.com



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