

**Cumberland County Community Development Program**  
**2012 CDBG Planning Program Application**  
*Town of Gray*

**Project Title**      Gray Hancock Block Master Plan

**Lead Community**      Town of Gray

**Additional Communities**      \_\_\_\_\_

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**Amount of CDBG Funds Requested**      \$5,000

**Total Estimated Project Cost**      \$20,000

**Name of Authorized Official**      Deborah Cabana

**Signature of Authorized Official**      \_\_\_\_\_



## 2012 Planning Application Questions

### GRAY HANCOCK BLOCK MASTER PLAN

**1. Describe the community problem or needs you wish to address with Community Planning funds. - 35 Points.**

**a. Describe the scope, magnitude, and severity of the problem.**

Like many historic downtowns in Maine, Gray Village has seen a decline from its heyday in the 19th and early 20th centuries. During those earlier periods, the Village was the primary focus of commercial activity and community life, and the character of the buildings and landscape reflected its social importance. In the post-WWII period, development of the automobile culture drew activities and focus to more regional locations, and care and attention to the Village and its structures waned. Historic buildings were allowed to decline, and many of them were torn down and replaced with service stations and fast food restaurants.

The Village is now an odd mixture of historic buildings and more modern structures and sites that lack visual or functional cohesiveness needed for a vibrant downtown. The declining quality and hodgepodge results have discouraged investment in properties, and the overall economic health of the Village and community has suffered as a result. The Hancock Block as it was known historically or by its modern moniker “The Triangle” is a prime example of the contrast and conflict between historic quality and modern decline in Gray Village. As the attached photos indicate, three of its six properties are occupied by attractive, well-kept buildings that contribute to the community. Three other buildings, however, detract from the neighborhood’s character and discourage investment. Over time, conditions continue to go from bad to worse.

**b. Describe past efforts, if any, to address the problem.**

The owner of the largest property on the block hired consultants in the past to explore the feasibility of redevelopment. Studies concluded that the geometry of the property, a conflict over property boundaries with an abutter, and the soft commercial real estate market (before the Great Recession) made redevelopment impossible for the foreseeable future. That owner is interested in working with the Town to move the block toward workable redevelopment outcomes.

A second owner was approached by the Town about the condition of a dilapidated building that was in danger of collapse. The building was torn down by the owner without permits and a foundation was installed that sat as an open hazard until court action caused it to be capped over. It has remained in this state for two years and no plans are on the horizon to change the situation. The owner’s plans for building on the foundation would not comply with zoning requirements, and he has no money to proceed.

A third strategic property is occupied by an auto repair service and the building and property sit on the corner that provides the major gateway presentation as you enter Gray Village. That owner is also willing to work with the Town on property improvements but lacks any capital to do so. The Town applied for matching CDBG funding to do façade improvements in 2008 but was not granted an award.

**c. Does the problem have specific impacts on low/moderate income households or low/moderate income neighborhoods?**

The condition of Gray Village as a downtown has implications for the general quality of life and economic health for all of the 7800 citizens of the community. The Village itself in the section involved in the CDBG program is part of census block group with a total population of 878 people, of which 398 or 45 percent are in low to moderate income households. The other census block group making up Gray Village has a total population of 1583, with 654 or 41 percent being low to moderate income. So over 1000 LMI people are potentially benefitted.

For these households and individuals, downtown revitalization removes or prevents blight in their neighborhoods and provides opportunities for services and employment within close proximity to their homes, thereby reducing the need to seek those opportunities elsewhere, which helps address the region's transportation challenges.

**d. Why are CDBG funds critical to the planning activity's success?**

As indicated in the explanation of the problem in Question 1.b above, the Town and a majority of property owners on the block are interested in redevelopment and property improvements. In addition to identifying potential capital sources, developing a common vision for the block through a master planning process will foster communication and cooperation between landowners so that win-win solutions can be identified and pursued.

CDBG funds for planning activity and the potential for project funding in the future provide a needed source of incentive for landowners to participate in the planning process. It will also stimulate funding support from private sources that are being solicited and from taxpayers who will be asked to contribute to the planning project as well.

**2. What is the strategy to complete the planning project? - 30 points**

**a. Describe the planning tasks to be undertaken**

Successful redevelopment of the block will require careful planning and cooperation of the property owners. The process will start with an engineering analysis of the site constraints and opportunities for redevelopment, looking at stormwater and wastewater management and parking as the physical limiting factors. Calculations will be made to establish a maximum build out capacity of the block.

This baseline assessment of development potential will be reviewed by a local architect who will also review the existing buildings for expansion potential or replacement. Several concepts will be prepared to illustrate redevelopment options in terms of building forms and locations.

The engineering assessment and architectural concepts will provide essential background information for a public participation process involving stakeholders and members of the general public to create a common vision for one or more redevelopment models that can be effectively marketed. The planning process will establish goals and objectives for the block in terms of potential uses or use mixtures and desired amenities and design features.

The output of the public participation efforts will then be refined into a proposed master development plan. That plan will serve as the basis for a special zoning template that will be the governing regulations for redevelopment of the block. The combination of professional assessments and community support will greatly improve the marketability of the properties to potential investors.

**b. Outline the project's schedule**

See attached project schedule.

**c. Are community partnerships established and engaged in the project?**

The Director of Economic Development has been working with landowners to encourage participation in the planning project. The Community Economic Development Committee has endorsed the project as the next major step in the downtown revitalization process. The process will also engage other stakeholders, including local business owners and Village residents, and civic groups like the Historical Society and Library Association.

**3. Convey your community's readiness to proceed. – 30 points**

**a. How has the project been conveyed to community residents?**

The Village Master Plan that has provided policy and program guidance for this effort involved an extensive public participation process. A letter has been sent to all property owners in the block notifying them of the grant application. If the project goes forward, all property owners in the surrounding neighborhood will be notified and invited to participate in the planning process. The process will involve additional community outreach to convey project goals and content and to solicit input for the project outcomes and a redevelopment vision for the block.

**b. Are matching funds available for the project?**

\$5,000 in general funds will be available for matching funds from the Town. \$5,000 worth of staff involvement will be provided and another \$5,000 will be raised from private sources. With the CDBG funding, the total project resources will be \$20,000.

**c. Are staff and/or consultants available to complete the project?**

The planning and engineering components of the project will be contracted with the consultants who provide these services to the Town of an on-going basis. Both firms have adequate capacity for the project and in-depth knowledge of the properties and project goals. The architectural component will be put out to an RFP process to find a firm with downtown revitalization and historic preservation expertise.

**4. Budget for project. Fill in the attached budget form *and provide the basis for determination of budget amounts (Appendix II).***



### Project Implementation Schedule

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Q #1 J – S 2012</b>	<b>Q #2 O – D 2012</b>	<b>Q #3 J – M 2013</b>	<b>Q #4 A – J 2013</b>	<b>Q #5 J – S 2013</b>	<b>Q #6 O – D 2013</b>	<b>Q #7 J – M 2014</b>	<b>Q #8 A – J 2014</b>
Contract/ Environmental Review	X							
Reporting		X	X	X	X			
Architect RFP	X							
Execute Contracts	X							
Engineering Analysis	X	X						
Planning Program	X	X	X	X				
Architectural Analysis	X	X						
Design Charrette			X					
Draft Report			X					
Council Report				X				
Final Report				X				
Project Completed:					X			



## Appendix II: Budget

<b>Planning Grant – Program Budget</b>				
<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>CDBG Funds</b>	<b>Municipal Funds</b>	<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Consultant Services</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	<b>\$4000</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>
<b>Advertising</b>		<b>\$400</b>		<b>\$400</b>
<b>Public Meetings</b>		<b>\$200</b>		<b>\$200</b>
<b>Printing</b>		<b>\$300</b>		<b>\$300</b>
<b>Mailings</b>		<b>\$100</b>		<b>\$100</b>
<b>Other</b>				
<b>1. Staff involvement in-kind services</b>		<b>\$5000</b>		<b>\$5000</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts:</b>				
<p>Based on prior experiences of consultant with master planning processes.</p>				



# GRAY CDBG PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION 2012 Hancock Block Master Plan



- A. Create a park
- B. Combine entrances
- C. Extend sidewalk
- D. Brick sidewalks
- E. Upgrade crossing(s)
- F. Pedestrian signal
- G. Inventory paths
- H. Install bike lanes
- I. Install bike signs
- J. Put out for RFP
- K. Develop master plan

## VILLAGE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Property
-  Pedestrian
-  Bicycle

**GRAY CDBG PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION 2012  
Hancock Block Master Plan**



Neighborhood & Community Assets



Neighborhood & Community Liabilities