

Elevate the Opera House and Town Hall into a State of the Art Inconic Building

TOTAL NYF FUNDS REQUESTED \$1,156,000

TOTAL PROJECT COST \$1,281,000

% OF TOTAL PROJECT COST 90%



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Town of Lancaster and the Lancaster Opera House, Inc. are partnering on a project to upgrade the Town Hall and Opera House. Both uses are housed in the same building in the center of Downtown Lancaster. To maximize the impact on downtown, the partners have agreed to focus improvements on the most visible portions of the building.

Consequently, the scope includes replacing 47 windows on the 1897 historic building. The majority of the window replacements (30) are proposed on the Central Avenue façade and the remainder will be located on the north and south sides of the building. The new windows will be aluminum clad wood windows to comply with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) guidelines. Design and installation of the windows will be consistent with the original historic windows regarding design, profiles, and muntin configurations. Installation of the windows will also improve energy efficiency of the building and reduce traffic noise that often interrupts opera house performances. Additional exterior work includes a sign on the south side of the building to advertise events and replacement.

Beyond exterior improvements, the Opera House is also upgrading its lighting and sound equipment. These technological advancements will allow for crisper audio and more dynamic lighting, reflecting a commitment to producing top-tier productions. By investing in these state-of-the-art systems, the Opera House ensures a contemporary theater experience for its patrons. It emphasizes its dedication to presenting work of the highest quality.

The Town Hall and Opera House is the most iconic building in Downtown Lancaster, and it is used in the Village's branding. Preservation of the building, and the active Opera House, is critical to maintain the revitalization momentum in the downtown core.

PROJECT LOCATION / ADDRESS

21 Central Avenue, Lancaster, NY

PROJECT SPONSOR

Town of Lancaster and the Lancaster Opera House, Inc.

PROPERTY OWNER

The Town of Lancaster is the owner of the property and leases the Opera House portion of the building to the Lancaster Opera House Inc., with a current open-ended lease term to 2030.



CAPACITY

This is a transformative first phase of a larger long-term project to upgrade the Town Hall and Opera House that will preserve the historic building, improve its appearance, and enhance the Opera House.

Both the Town of Lancaster and Lancaster Opera House have received and successfully administered State and private grants. The Opera House is also in the middle of a \$1,000,000 capital campaign to support additional work to complement the NYF investment. Recently, the Opera House received a \$293,000 grant to replace a broken and obsolete HVAC system.

The Town will be developing a MOU with the Opera House for the project and implementation of NYF grant funding. Building maintenance funding is included in the Town's annual budget to protect the NYF investment.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Town of Lancaster is partnering with the Lancaster Opera House to advance the project. Most of the scope and cost is attributable to improvements for the Opera House, but all the improvements will benefit both partners.

The Town of Lancaster will manage the window replacements (& remediation). The sound, lighting, and installation of the south façade signage will be managed by the Lancaster Opera House in coordination with the Town of Lancaster.

REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

NYF STRATEGIES

- **Promote adaptive reuse of historic buildings for modern needs in order to attract new and creative businesses:** Installation of historically appropriate windows will promote the long-term sustainability of the historic building, reduce energy use, and minimize traffic noise in the performance space. Creation of new signage advertising events will respond to modern needs.
- **Preserve Lancaster's defining historic architecture:** The Town Hall and Opera House is the most iconic, and place-defining, building in Downtown Lancaster.
- **Utilize arts and culture to create a unique sense of place, improve the quality of life, encourage creativity, foster inclusivity, and build community:** Improvements to the Lancaster Opera House will promote arts and culture in Lancaster and the Buffalo-Niagara region.

REDC STRATEGIES

- **Encourage redevelopment of downtowns and main streets:** The Town Hall and Opera House is an architectural and cultural anchor in Downtown and its renovation will accelerate redevelopment of downtown Lancaster.

DECARBONIZATION

This project does not meet the threshold for decarbonization.

RESILIENCY

The project does not incorporate any resiliency measures.

PROJECT SYNERGIES

The project synergizes well with other NY Forward projects aimed at historic preservation and energy efficiency. The Town Hall and Opera House project acts as a catalyst for community-led initiatives, as it encourages other local stakeholders to see the benefits of coupling historical preservation with modern sustainability practices, thus creating a ripple effect that could influence a range of other projects.

The project also has synergies other similar building improvement projects along Central Avenue. Proposed building improvement projects along or near Central Avenue complementary to 43 Central include Skoobs Grill, 32 Central Avenue, 1 West Main Street, Town Hall/Opera House updates, 16 Central Avenue, and multiple potential small project grant fund buildings will complement the Town Hall and Opera House project

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The project enjoys strong public support, primarily due to its strategic location in the heart of Downtown Lancaster and its commitment to preserving a historic landmark that houses both the Town Hall and Opera House. The initiative resonates with the local community, as evidenced by positive feedback in public forums and surveys. The upgrades, particularly those that are visible from the main streets, are likely to garner widespread public approval.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget for windows was provided from quotes from contractors experienced in installing energy-efficient and historically appropriate windows. It includes the windows' cost, labor, and any associated fees or permits. Due to the building's status as a historic property, specialized windows and installation techniques are required, accounting for budgetary needs. Similarly, quotes were also received from suppliers for the south façade event sign.

The Town of Lancaster has committed to providing approximately 10% of costs attributed to Town Hall improvements, or \$125,000. The NYF requests represent 90% of the total project costs.

BUDGET

Activity	Amount	Funding Source	Status of Funds
Window Replacements	\$446,000	NYF	Requested
	\$112,000	Town	Secured
Lighting & Sound	\$350,000	NYF	Requested
South Facade Signage	\$100,000	NYF	Requested
Asbestos Remediation	\$25,000	NYF	Requested
Design	\$121,000	NYF	Requested
	\$13,000	Town	Secured
Total NYF Funding Request			\$1,156,000
Total Funding from Other Sources			\$125,000
Total Project Cost			\$1,281,000
% Requested of Total Project Cost			90%

PROJECT FEASIBILITY AND IMPACT

The Town of Lancaster has a proven history of successfully managing and completing State and privately funded projects, instilling a high degree of confidence in the project's feasibility. The Opera House has also demonstrated its capability through a successful capital campaign and a recently received grant for HVAC improvements. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town and the Opera House is being developed to ensure streamlined NYF grant funding implementation.

Economically, preserving and enhancing the Town Hall and Opera House can stimulate further downtown activity, creating a cascading effect on nearby businesses. Environmentally, improved energy efficiency resonates with the broader goals

of sustainable urban development. Lastly, the social and cultural significance of the building cannot be understated; its revitalization ensures Lancaster's rich history continues to resonate through its walls, fostering a deep-rooted sense of community pride and belonging. The Opera House is a regional cultural center, attracting visitors outside of Lancaster from the Western New York metropolitan area. Proposed improvements will further strengthen the Opera House and ensure its long-term sustainability.

As the most iconic building downtown, improvements to the Town Hall are vital to revitalization efforts. The Town Hall's cupola provides a visual termination for both West Main Street and Central Avenue; the building is the most important anchor downtown.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

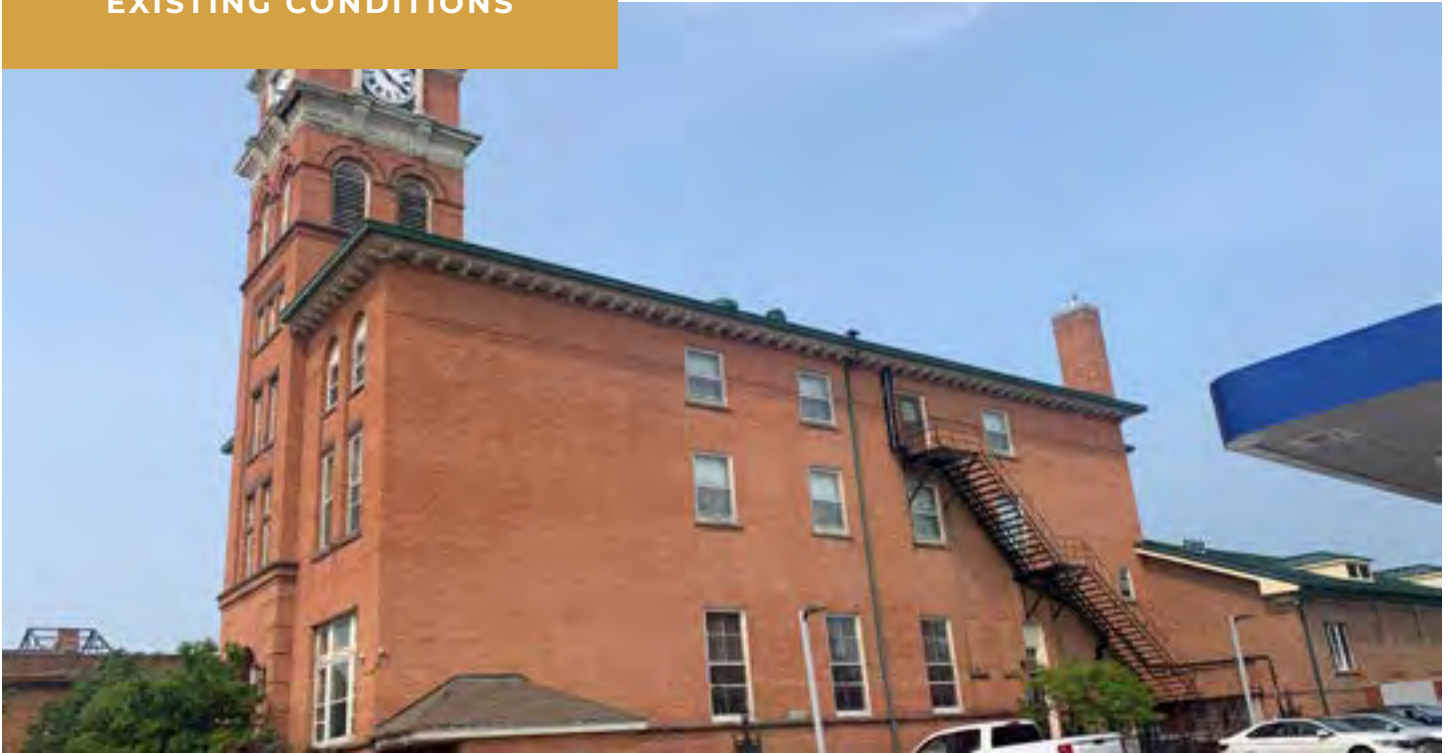
The renovations will need to adhere to guidelines set by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for historical buildings. While the Town is not required to submit the project to the Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission, it is recommended. Since the improvements involve a contributing building in a National Register Historic District, utilizing State funding, State Environmental Quality Review Act procedures will need to be followed.

Additional time has been added to the timeline for implementation to accommodate potential negotiations with SHPO. For building within National Register Districts, repair of windows must be considered before replacement, and therefore the Town may need time to get approval for replacement.

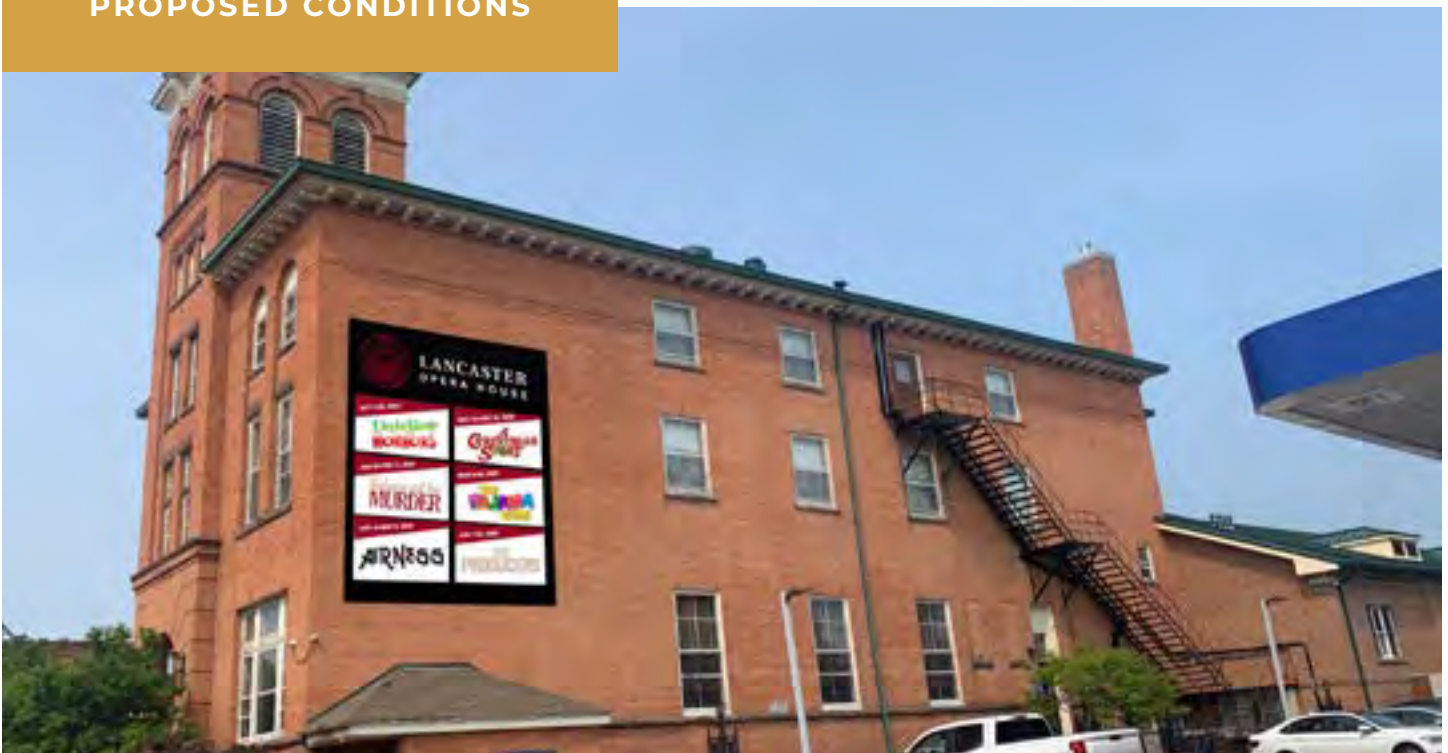
TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Anticipated Start Date: January 2024	
Project Stage	Timeframe
Funding Contract Approval & Authorization to Proceed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution of contract with funding agency 	4 Months
Design & Bid Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare final design and construction documents for the lobby, windows and site work • Review and approvals by the Historic Preservation Commission • SHPO consultation • Solicit bid requests • Review and award bid requests • Obtain permits (Opera House improvements) 	12 Months
Construction	8 Months
Total Time Frame	24 Months
Anticipated Completion Date: Winter 2026	

EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED CONDITIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED CONDITIONS

