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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: GM ON MAIN STREET GRANT RECIPIENT HOLLY, MICHIGAN



The newly beautified Holly Battle Alley Social District, thanks to the GM on Main Street grant © Holly Downtown Development Authority.

In February 2024, the GM on Main Street Grant Program awarded five \$50,000 grants to nonprofit organizations and municipal government entities near GM facilities to implement innovative placemaking initiatives in their local districts.

Among the 2024 grantees was Holly Downtown Development Authority, a Main Street America accredited community in Holly, Michigan. They received funding for their Beautify Holly Battle Alley Social District and Ganshaw Park projects. Battle Alley is a pedestrian-only social district in Holly's downtown that offers an accessible and free place for community members and visitors to gather, enjoy events, and more.

The project was spurred by the need for beautification after a devastating fire in 2022, which destroyed or damaged a number of trees in the area. The grant funding supported tree planters, benches, and trash cans. But beyond simple cosmetic improvements, the grant allowed community leaders to reimagine the social district and park as a vibrant community gathering space,

creating more beautiful, accessible, and inviting public places for residents and visitors alike.

The project tackled multiple aspects of community development. Rotting trees were removed and replaced with new, sustainable plantings. Tree planters were strategically placed throughout the social district, adding greenery and structure to the urban landscape. New park benches and freshly painted light poles transformed the area's aesthetic, while improved sidewalks enhanced walkability and safety.

Nick Klempp, Holly's DDA Director, emphasized the significance of the project for a small village with limited resources. "These types of projects are on our long list of wishes that we would love to get done," Klempp explained. "A small village like Holly has little funds for places like parks, yet they are so important."

The project's reach has been impressive. An estimated 500 community residents have already benefited from the improvements. The transformation has created a safer, more welcoming entrance to the downtown area and midtown park, encouraging community interaction and providing a picturesque space for relaxation.

While the GM grant provided the primary funding, the village leveraged additional resources, including an Oakland County grant and DDA budget. Local businesses and community members contributed in-kind donations, including two trees, demonstrating a shared commitment to community enhancement.

The project required five contractors and approximately 30 volunteer hours, highlighting the collective effort behind the transformation. This collaborative approach not only made the project possible but also strengthened community bonds.

The grant has also opened doors for future development. As Klempp noted, "Because of this work, we can now move to other phases of both the park and downtown/ sidewalks that would not have been on the plan for years to come!"

The GM on Main Street Grant Program has proven to be more than just a funding opportunity. It's a transformative initiative that empowers small communities like Holly to realize their vision of a more vibrant, connected, and beautiful public space.

About the 2025 GM on Main Street Grant Program

In 2025, the GM on Main Street grant program will fund five \$60,000 grants for transportation-focused projects, increasing total funding to \$300,000, to select eligible communities. One of these five grants will be designated for a federally recognized tribe located within the Main Street America network.

The program provides funding for innovative transportation that will improve the safety, accessibility, and vibrancy of Main Street districts. We're looking for ideas that will make your downtown more walkable, safe, accessible, and attractive for both visitors and residents. Proposals should focus on projects that elevate GM and MSA's to promote pedestrian safety and traffic calming initiatives to improve quality of life in our Main Streets.

Eligible organizations can submit their project proposals from **Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. CT** to **Sunday, March 2, at 11:59 p.m. CT**. Please note that project proposals for the \$60,000 GM on Main Street Grant should be feasible to complete and be usable by the public by **November 30, 2025**.

Applications will be selected by a review panel and alerted of their award by early **April 2025**.