

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD  
REQUEST FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACTION  
For Inclusion on Board Agenda

Resolution or Ordinance (Blue) \_\_\_\_\_ *Waiver of First Requested*  
  X   Recommendations of Boards, Commissions & Committees (Green)  
Other Business (Pink)

TO: PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FROM: Scott Niehaus, Village Manager

DATE: February 24, 2026 (B of T) Date: March 5, 2026

TITLE: Local Tourism Grant Recommendation  
Lombard Historical Society – Explore Historic Lombard App

SUBMITTED BY: Nicole Aranas, Deputy Village Manager

BACKGROUND/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Attached please find information regarding a recommendation from the Community Promotion and Tourism Committee for approval of funding to the Lombard Historical Society toward the Explore Historic Lombard App. The Committee is recommending approval of a grant in the amount of \$5,000 through the Local Tourism grant program.

Please place this item on the consent agenda for the March 5, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting.

Review (as necessary):

Village Attorney X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Finance Director X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Village Manager X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: All materials must be submitted to and approved by the Village Manager's Office by 12:00 noon, Wednesday, prior to the Agenda Distribution.



## Memorandum

**TO:** Scott Niehaus  
Village Manager

**FROM:** Nicole P. Aranas  
Deputy Village Manager

**DATE:** February 24, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Community Promotion & Tourism Committee Recommendation  
Lombard Historical Society – Explore Historic Lombard App

The following is a recommendation from the Community Promotion & Tourism Committee for funding through the Local Tourism Grant Program for the Lombard Historical Society in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 for the Explore Historic Lombard App.

**Grant Request: \$5,000**

The Lombard Historical Society has requested a grant in the amount of \$5,000 to be used toward the cost of the development and launch of a new mobile app, developed in partnership with Pigeon Tech. The app will feature GPS-enabled, self-guided tours of Lilacia Park, downtown Lombard, the Victorian Cottage, the Carriage House, and Sheldon Peck Homestead. In addition to enhancing visitor engagement, the app will serve as a platform to promote community activities and events.

The grant request from the Lombard Historical Society and event budget are attached for your review.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Community Promotion & Tourism Committee recommends a grant in an amount up to \$5,000 to the Lombard Historical Society, to be used towards the costs of the launch and development of the Explore Historic Lombard App.

Please place this item on the consent agenda of the March 5, 2026, agenda of the Board of Trustees.

**VILLAGE OF LOMBARD  
LOCAL TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM 2026 APPLICATION FORM**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Organization:	Lombard Historical Society		
Name of event:	Explore Historic Lombard App		
Date of event:	5/1/2026	Event location:	Downtown Lombard/Museum Sites/Lilacia Park
Contact person:	Alison Costanzo	Title:	Executive Director
Business address:	23 W Maple Street	City & Zip	Lombard, IL
Telephone:	630-629-1885	Email:	director@lombardhistory.org

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Total cost of the project:	\$10,000
Cost of city services requested in this application (if any):	\$
Grant funding requested in this application (excluding city services)	\$5,000
Total funding requested in this application (grant including services):	\$ 5,000
Percent of total project cost being requested:	50%
Anticipated attendance:	1000+
Anticipated number of overnight hotel stays:	

Briefly describe the project for which are funds are being requested:

The Lombard Historical Society (LHS) is requesting funds to create a mobile app, developed in partnership with Pigeon Tech, that will strengthen historic tourism while also connecting Lombard's past to the vibrant activities happening in the community today. Launching during Lilac Time, the app will feature GPS-enabled, self-guided tours of Lilacia Park, downtown Lombard, the Victorian Cottage, the Carriage House, and the Sheldon Peck Homestead. Through interpretive stories, photos, and multimedia content, visitors will be able to explore Lombard's history in an accessible, engaging format.

At the same time, the app will highlight current community activities beginning with the full Lilac Time festival schedule and then the Power of Place Art Exhibition. Over time, it will expand to include additional downtown events such as Cruise Nights, the Farmers Market, and Spooktacular, as well as select LHS programming and business features in partnership with the Lombard Chamber of Commerce. By blending historic interpretation with up-to-date event information, the app encourages broader and ongoing interest from both residents and visitors.

**ORGANIZATION**

Number of years that the organization has been in existence:	55
Number of years that the project or event has been in existence:	0

Number of years the project has been supported by Village of Lombard funds:	0
How many years does the organization anticipate it will request grant funding?	1

1) Describe the organization (include brief history, mission, and ability to carry out this project):

The Lombard Historical Society (LHS) was founded in 1969 following Lombard’s centennial celebration and is dedicated to preserving, promoting, presenting, and protecting the community’s history. Through exhibitions, walking tours, school and public programs, special events, and preservation initiatives, LHS connects residents and visitors to Lombard’s past while demonstrating how history continues to shape the village today.

LHS operates with two full-time and two part-time staff members, supported by more than 50 trained volunteers who assist with collections care, research, public programs, and community outreach. As the primary steward of Lombard’s history, LHS holds extensive knowledge of the village’s historic people, places, and stories. The organization already leads popular historic walking tours including those offered during Lilac Time, which demonstrates our strong capacity for developing accurate and engaging interpretive content that is essential to this project.

LHS maintains close collaborative relationships with the Lombard Park District and the Lombard Chamber of Commerce, partnering on events and initiatives that promote culture, community engagement, and tourism.

As a cultural organization, LHS is committed to expanding its reach and connecting with broader audiences. While traditional historic tours and programs appeal to many, a history-focused app on its own may not draw in every visitor. By including current community activities and events such as Lilac Time programming, Cruise Nights, the Farmers Market, and other downtown happenings, the app will have a much broader appeal. This blend of past and present will attract a wider audience and encourage year-round interest in Lombard.

With its mission, expertise, community partnerships, and long-standing experience delivering public programs, LHS is well prepared to manage and implement this mobile app project. The app will allow us to connect more people to Lombard’s history while also promoting the vibrant activities happening in the community today, supporting the goals and impact of this grant.

2) Please describe how the program and any proceeds from the event support the goals and objectives of the organization, other local groups or initiatives, and the community at large:

The development of this mobile app directly supports the goals of the Lombard Historical Society (LHS) by expanding access to the community's history and strengthening connections between residents, visitors, and the places that define Lombard. The app enhances our ability to share historic information through engaging digital tools while also promoting current community activities. This aligns with LHS's mission to preserve and present local history in ways that are meaningful, accessible, and relevant.

The app also benefits our other community partners. By featuring Lilac Time activities and select programming from the Lombard Park District, as well as highlighting businesses and downtown events in collaboration with the Lombard Chamber of Commerce, the app helps amplify existing community initiatives that support tourism, economic vitality, and civic engagement. It serves as a unified platform where historic interpretation and modern community life come together, supporting the efforts of multiple organizations working to promote Lombard.

For the community at large, the app provides an easy and enjoyable way to explore Lombard's historic sites and participate in local events. It encourages residents and visitors to spend more time in the village, discover new places, attend community programs, and engage with local businesses. As usage grows, any proceeds or increased visitation resulting from the app will be reinvested into LHS's programming and preservation work, further strengthening our ability to serve Lombard.

Ultimately, this project supports a shared goal across organizations. It enhances the visitor experience, promotes local history and culture, strengthens tourism, and fosters a greater sense of community pride and connection throughout Lombard.

3) What is the organization's plan to make the project self-sustaining?

The Lombard Historical Society has a practical and achievable plan to ensure that the mobile app remains self-sustaining beyond the initial development phase. The three-year agreement with Pigeon Tech includes ongoing maintenance, updates, and content expansion at a fixed monthly cost, which allows LHS to budget confidently for the future. This ensures that the app can grow and remain current without additional financial burden on the organization.

Its usefulness and visibility will encourage repeat engagement, community partnerships, and increased attendance at LHS programs and events. This added visibility will help strengthen membership, donations, and participation, which in turn supports the ongoing costs of the app.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Is the event open to the general public?                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Do you intend to apply for a liquor license for this project?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Will any revenues from this event be returned to the community? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Have you requested grant funding in the past?                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |

If yes, provide grant awards for past 5 years:

The "Annie"-Versary: 100 Years of Little Orphan Annie  
The Food Truck Social on Maple Street

1) Provide a full detailed description of the proposed project or event.

The Lombard Historical Society (LHS), in partnership with Pigeon Tech, is proposing the creation of a new mobile app that will help people explore Lombard's history while also keeping up with the many activities happening around town. The goal is to create an easy and engaging tool that brings together the best of Lombard's past and present and encourages both residents and visitors to get out and enjoy everything the village has to offer. Grant funds will support the development and launch of this app.

The project will begin during Lilac Time, Lombard's biggest annual celebration. The app will include the full Lilac Time schedule giving visitors one convenient place to find everything that's happening. The first version of the app will include GPS-enabled walking tours of key features in Lilacia Park, select historic sites in downtown Lombard, the Victorian Cottage, the Carriage House, and the Sheldon Peck Homestead. Users will be able to explore these sites at their own pace and enjoy photos, stories, audio clips, and other features that help bring Lombard's history to life.

After Lilac Time, the app will continue to grow. New content and features will be added to highlight popular downtown events like Cruise Nights, the Farmers Market, and Spooktacular, as well as select LHS programs. One major addition will be America's 250, a nationwide commemoration marking the 250th anniversary of the United States. As Lombard participates in this milestone celebration, the app will help showcase related exhibits, programs, and community art displays, making it easier for users to follow and experience the events tied to this historic occasion.

LHS will also work with the Lombard Chamber of Commerce to highlight local businesses and encourage people to shop, dine, and explore downtown. By blending historic interpretation with current community activities, the app will appeal to a broad audience, including those who may not typically seek out historical content.

To make the experience even more engaging, the app will include features such as surveys, photo galleries, scavenger hunts, and other interactive tools that encourage exploration. These features will also help LHS and its partners understand visitor interests and app usage patterns.

Pigeon Tech will build and maintain the app for a fixed cost, and a three-year agreement ensures that updates and additional content can be added at no extra charge. This guarantees steady, sustainable growth of the app without creating additional financial pressure for LHS.

Overall, this project will help boost tourism, support local businesses, and make it easier for people to explore Lombard's historic sites and community events. By offering an easy-to-use digital resource, LHS hopes to inspire more people to learn about Lombard's past while also enjoying everything happening in the village today, including major cultural moments such as America's 250.

2) If your application is accepted, how will the tourism grant funds be used?

The tourism grant funds will be used to cover the development and launch of a new mobile app created with Pigeon Tech. This includes building the app's initial features, such as GPS-enabled historic tours, multimedia content, and the full Lilac Time schedule. The grant will also support adding early community content, including events tied to America's 250. All requested funds are dedicated to creating and launching the app, with future updates covered by LHS's maintenance agreement at no additional cost.

3) What modifications to the event or other steps will be taken to increase event attendance over previous years (not applicable to first time events)?

**LOCATION**

Provide the location of the event or project. If a location has not been secured, list the venue(s) being proposed or considered.

As this project involves the creation of a mobile app, there is no single physical location where the event or project takes place. Instead, the app will highlight a variety of locations throughout the Village of Lombard. LHS has already been in discussions with the Lombard Park District and the Lombard Chamber of Commerce about featuring key areas such as Lilacia Park, historic buildings in downtown Lombard, and other community sites. These locations will be included as part of the app's tours and interactive features, allowing users to explore them at their own pace.

**MILESTONES AND TIMETABLES**

Describe the milestones that will mark the progress towards implementing the project and provide a timetable for the completion of each milestone.

**Milestone 1: Project Approval and Contracting**

**Estimated Completion: Month 1**

Once the tourism grant is awarded, LHS will finalize the agreement with Pigeon Tech, confirm the project scope, and begin preparing content for the app.

**Milestone 2: Initial App Design and Framework**

**Estimated Completion: Months 1–2**

Pigeon Tech will create the app's layout, navigation, branding, and basic structure. LHS will begin organizing media, stories, and tour information for the first phase of the app.

**Milestone 3: Content Development for Lilac Time and Downtown Features**

**Estimated Completion: Months 2–3**

LHS will pull from already developed content to highlight a select number of historic buildings in downtown Lombard and incorporate existing Lilac Time tour content featuring key elements of Lilacia Park. The Lilac Time Committee, will help coordinate the information needed to ensure locations, schedules, and featured elements are accurate and up to date.

**Milestone 4: App Build and Internal Testing**

**Estimated Completion: Month 3**

Pigeon Tech will integrate the selected content, GPS points, photographs, audio elements, maps, and the Lilac Time schedule. LHS staff and project partners will test the app to ensure clarity, accuracy, and ease of use.

**Milestone 5: Public Launch for Lilac Time**

**Estimated Completion: Month 4**

The first version of the app will launch ahead of Lilac Time, providing users with historic tours, festival information, and an engaging digital experience.

**Milestone 6: Post-Launch Enhancements and Additional Community Content**

**Estimated Completion: Months 5–8**

After the launch, additional features will be added such as Cruise Nights, the Farmers Market, Spooktacular, and early America's 250 programming. User feedback will guide refinements and improvements.

**Milestone 7: Ongoing Updates and Year-Round Expansion**

**Estimated Completion: Months 9–12 and beyond**

LHS will continue adding new historic content, community programming, updated tour routes, and seasonal events. All updates are supported through Pigeon Tech's maintenance agreement at no additional cost.

## **IMPACT**

- 1) Please describe how the event or program will promote overnight stays and/or tourism within the Village of Lombard. If a returning event, detail the number of overnight stays generated and share details regarding the tourism impact of the event.

This project supports tourism and economic activity by focusing on downtown Lombard as the hub of both historic exploration and current community events. The new mobile app will highlight key historic buildings and locations downtown while also promoting signature events that draw visitors into the business district. By combining historic interpretation with up-to-date event information, the app encourages both residents and visitors to spend more time in the downtown area.

At launch during Lilac Time, the app will provide self-guided tours featuring downtown historic buildings, along with Lilac Time activities coordinated by the Lilac Time Committee. These tools help guide visitors through downtown Lombard, making it easier for them to discover shops, restaurants, and cultural sites they might otherwise miss. This increased foot traffic directly supports local businesses during one of Lombard's peak tourism seasons. As the app expands, it will continue to emphasize downtown. This creates a stronger, more consistent economic impact throughout the year.

The app also supports the Lombard Historical Society's mission and bottom line by increasing visibility for our programs and historic sites, many of which draw visitors into the downtown area. Greater awareness leads to more museum visits, program participation, and interest in membership and donations. By reaching audiences who may not initially be drawn to historic programming, the app helps expand LHS's impact and financial sustainability.

While the app itself is not designed to promote overnight stays directly, it strengthens the overall downtown experience, supports tourism activity, and contributes to sustained economic growth in the heart of Lombard. Over time, its emphasis on both historic and current downtown attractions will help make the village an even more appealing destination.

- 2) Please describe the economic benefit to local businesses and the Lombard community. How will your event draw more people from outside the local market (50 miles or more) or attract a new visitor audience?

The mobile app will create meaningful economic benefits for downtown Lombard and for the Lombard Historical Society (LHS). By highlighting historic buildings, public spaces, and major community events, the app guides visitors directly into the downtown area, increasing foot traffic and supporting local shops and restaurants. At the same time, the added visibility for LHS will help drive more visitors to our museums, exhibitions, programs, and tours. Increased attendance at these offerings, along with greater awareness of membership and donation opportunities, strengthens LHS's financial sustainability and supports our mission.

Launching during Lilac Time, which attracts many visitors from more than 50 miles away, the app enhances the visitor experience by providing GPS-enabled tours, highlights of key downtown buildings, and access to the full festival schedule. This encourages visitors to spend more time exploring the community and moving between Lilacia Park, downtown businesses, and LHS sites, generating a stronger economic impact for the village.

As the app expands to include other community events, it becomes a year-round tool for tourism. Visitors who download the app for Lilac Time will receive ongoing reasons to return to Lombard for additional experiences, benefiting both local businesses and LHS programs and exhibitions.

The app also reaches new audiences, including heritage tourists, families looking for self-guided experiences, festival-goers, and younger visitors who prefer digital guides. By blending historic interpretation with current community events, the app introduces Lombard to a wider range of people, many of whom may not have visited for historical reasons alone.

Overall, the app supports downtown Lombard's business district, increases participation in LHS programs and exhibitions, and broadens the village's appeal to visitors inside and outside the 50-mile radius. This sustained increase in engagement strengthens both the local economy and the long-term vitality of the Lombard Historical Society.

3) Who is the target audience for your event or project? What is your anticipated attendance?

The target audience for the mobile app is broad and reflects the many ways people experience Lombard. Key audiences include:

Visitors attending Lilac Time, including those traveling from more than 50 miles away who want an easy way to explore the festival and surrounding community.

Families and day-trippers interested in self-guided tours, scavenger hunts, and local events

Heritage tourists drawn to historic sites, walking tours, and cultural attractions

Local residents looking for a convenient tool to stay updated on events like Cruise Nights, the Farmers Market, and Spooktacular

New residents seeking to learn about Lombard's history, downtown, and community highlights

Younger, tech-friendly audiences who prefer digital exploration tools over printed materials

Because this is a mobile app rather than a single event, "attendance" is measured through downloads and engagement. Based on projected interest and existing participation in LHS programs and Lilac Time activities, we anticipate:

1,000-1,500 downloads in the first year

A noticeable increase in app activity during Lilac Time and other major downtown events

Steady growth over time as more features and content are added

This app is designed to attract new audiences who may not typically engage with historic programming, while also supporting returning visitors. Its combination of history and current activities will help expand tourism reach and strengthen engagement throughout the year.

4) Please identify and detail the estimated cost of any Village of Lombard services anticipated as part of the event (e.g., Police, Public Works, Fire, barricades, etc.). For each cost, confirm whether the costs for such services be covered by the host organization and reimbursed to the Village or are whether the services are requested to be covered under this grant. Any services not specifically requested below and approved as part of this grant, will be the responsibility of the applicant organization.

5) Please describe any collaborative arrangements developed or anticipated with other organizations to fund or otherwise implement the project (including in-kind donations).

LHS is partnering with Pigeon Tech, which is contributing \$5,000 toward the project and providing in-kind support through reduced development costs and ongoing app updates at no additional charge. We are also collaborating with the Lombard Park District in the marketing for Lilac Time and the Lombard Chamber of Commerce, who will help supply content and event information.

These partners will also assist with promotion through their websites and social media, expanding the app's reach without added expense. Together, these collaborations help lower project costs, ensure accurate content, and strengthen the app's impact for the entire Lombard community.

6) Please describe your marketing plan. Detail the strategies your organization will use to promote the event or project (e.g., advertising, public relations, marketing, print materials, promotional pieces).

The marketing plan for the mobile app uses a combination of community outreach and digital promotion to reach both residents and visitors. LHS will promote the app through the following strategies:

**Park District Program Booklet:** The app will be featured in the Lombard Park District's program booklet, which is mailed to all Lombard residents. This provides broad visibility leading up to Lilac Time.

**Press Release:** LHS will issue a press release announcing the app launch and its benefits for visitors and downtown businesses. The release will be shared with local newspapers, online news outlets, and community organizations to maximize coverage.

**Social Media:** Coordinated posts from LHS, the Lombard Park District, Lombard Chamber of Commerce will promote the app before and during Lilac Time. We also hope that the Village of Lombard will share the app through its social media channels and communication platforms.

**LHS Website and Email Marketing:** The app will be promoted prominently on the LHS website and in email newsletters sent to members, donors, and program participants.

**Partner Promotion:** Community partners will help distribute information through their websites, newsletters, and event communications, expanding the app's reach to new audiences.

**On-Site Signage and QR Codes:** During Lilac Time and other major events, signage with QR codes will make downloading the app quick and convenient for visitors.

Together, these strategies ensure the app is widely promoted throughout the community and beyond, supporting increased tourism, engagement, and economic activity in downtown Lombard.

- 7) Funding for the Local Tourism Grant Program for 2026 is constrained. What have you done to reduce the amount of funds your organization is requesting under this grant? If you do not receive the full funding you requested for 2026, how will your organization adjust? What modifications can/will you make to your budget or event if full grant funding is not made available?

LHS has already taken steps to reduce the total amount of funding requested by partnering with Pigeon Tech, which is contributing \$5,000 toward the project and providing in-kind support through reduced development costs and ongoing content updates at no additional charge. This partnership significantly lowers the amount LHS needs to request through the grant.

Because the app development cost is fixed and cannot be reduced without affecting the core functionality of the project, LHS is requesting only the amount necessary to launch the app. If the full funding requested is not awarded, LHS will not be able to move forward with the project at this time. The app requires complete funding upfront, and partial funding would not allow us to complete even a scaled-back version.

If full grant funding is not available, LHS will pause this initiative and explore future opportunities, partnerships, or alternative funding sources. The project will only move forward when the full amount needed for development can be secured.

#### **FINANCES**

- Please include a detailed itemized budget for your entire event on the attached budget form (2 years of past actuals and estimates for upcoming event).
- Attach a copy of the most recently completed agency audit and Federal Form 990. If these documents are not available, please explain why they are not available.

#### **CHECKLIST**

- Completed Local Tourism Grant Program Application Form.
- Completed detailed budget form.
- Promotional materials from past events (not applicable to first time events).
- Post event summary from past event (not applicable to first time events).
- Copy of the most recently completed agency audit or explanation of why it is not available.
- Copy of the most recent Federal Form 990 for the agency or explanation of why it is not available.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

- Applicant agrees to acknowledge Village of Lombard support in all event materials using required attribution language.
- Applicant agrees to submit a post-event summary within 90 days including attendance, hotel stays, marketing materials, and evaluation.
- Applicant understands that grant awards may be less than the requested amount and agrees to proceed with adjusted funding if awarded.

- Applicant confirms that no elected official, Village employee, immediate family member, or owned business entity will benefit from this grant funding.

Additional Notes, Comments or Explanations:

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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief that data in this application are true and correct, the application has been duly authorized by the organization and any funds received under this grant will be used for the purposes described in this application.

Name:	Alison Costanzo		
Title or office held:	Executive Director	Date:	12/10/2025

Signature: Alison Costanzo \_\_\_\_\_

