

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: January 23, 2026 (B of T) Date: February 5, 2026

TITLE: Local Tourism Grant Recommendation  
Lombard Garden Club – Annual Lilac Sale

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 Garden Club towards their annual Lilac Sale, during Lilac time. The Committee is recommending approval of a grant of up to \$2,000 through the Local Tourism grant program.

Please place this item on the consent agenda for the February 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.



#260012  
(DISTRICT #1)

## Memorandum

**TO:** Scott Niehaus  
Village Manager

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

**DATE:** January 23, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Community Promotion & Tourism Committee Recommendation  
Local Tourism Grant – Lombard Garden Club – Lilac Sale

The following is a recommendation from the Community Promotion & Tourism Committee for funding through the Local Tourism Grant Program for the Lombard Garden Club in an amount not to exceed \$2,000 for their Lilac Sale, an annual sale of lilac bushes and trees and Lombard tradition. The event is scheduled to take place on May 7, 2026.

**Grant Request: \$2,000**

The Lombard Garden Club has requested a grant in the amount of \$2,000 to be used toward the Lilac Sale. The Lombard Garden Club is requesting funds to cover costs including the cost of plants, potting soil, and containers used for the cultivation of lilacs for this event. The sale attracts local buyers, members of garden clubs throughout Illinois as well as out-of-state buyers.

The grant request from the Lombard Garden Club and event budget are attached for your review.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Community Promotion & Tourism Committee recommend a grant in an amount up to \$2,000 to the Lombard Garden Club, to be used towards the reimbursement of expenses relating to the annual Lombard Garden Club Lilac Sale.

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

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Organization:	Lombard Garden Club, Inc.		
Name of event:	Lilac Sale 2026		
Date of event:	5/7/2026	Event location:	Lilacia Park
Contact person:	Sharon Rakowski	Title:	Grant Writer
Business address:	PO Box 885	City & Zip	Lombard, IL 60148
Telephone:	630-805-2405	Email:	sharonsrakowski@gmail.com

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Total cost of the project:	\$7500.00
Cost of city services requested in this application (if any):	\$0
Grant funding requested in this application (excluding city services)	\$2000
Total funding requested in this application (grant including services):	\$ 2000
Percent of total project cost being requested:	26%
Anticipated attendance:	1200
Anticipated number of overnight hotel stays:	unknown

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

The Lombard Garden Club's annual sale is held during the Village's Lilac Time and just prior to Mother's Day. The sale is a Lombard tradition dating back nearly 50 years. In 2026, the Lilac Sale is planned for May 7, 2026 and possibly subsequent days if the lilacs aren't sold out on the first day.

**ORGANIZATION**

Number of years that the organization has been in existence:	99 years since the founding of the Club and 18 years since incorporation as a non for profit organization.
Number of years that the project or event has been in existence:	At least since 1974; records prior to that year are incomplete.
Number of years the project has been supported by Village of Lombard funds:	9
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):

1) Describe the organization (include brief history, mission, and ability to carry out this project):  
 Celebrating its 100th year in existence in 2026, the Club was organized and incorporated as not for profit in 2009. It has remained with its stated goals – “The object of this Club shall be to promote an interest in and to beautify the landscape of our community.” To raise the necessary funds to meet these goals, the Club has held successful lilac sales since 1974. The costs of the lilacs, potting soil and containers has risen throughout the years, the club has kept the selling prices of the lilacs competitive, since sale is a long established tradition within the Village. The sale attracts homeowners and gardeners from throughout the region. Many of the repeat ae to Lombard families who return year after year for Mother’s day gift for Mom or Grandma. Even people who move out of Lombard continue to return to purchase lilacs. In addition, there are customers from Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana. The club is confident that it can continue to make the sale a success in the future. This grant is being requested so prices can be kept within the reach of Lombard families and competitive enough to attract out of state customers. These additional funds will also allow the club to fund and expand its many community projects.

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 profit from the lac Sale has been used in these ways:

- College scholarships for Lombard students
- Monthly educational programs open to club members and the public at no charge. In addition to gardening landscaping topics, programs feature environmental issues and conservation
- A special presentation this past year was Lonnie Morris, founder and director of the DuPage Monarch Project, who spoke on the importance of monarch butterflies and pollinators.
- Purchase of materials for maintaining community gardens in Lombard: butterfly gardens in Lilacia Park, native plants at the Sheldon Peck Homestead, Maple Street Chapel and Terrace View park.
- Support of the vegetable gardens at Parkview Elementary, Pleasant Lane Elementary and Westmore Elementary Schools.
- Annual donation to the Lombard Park District in recognition of their assistance with the Lilac Sale. This assistance includes sorting the plants after potting by club members and helping to stage the plants for the sale.

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

The project is currently self-sustaining. However, due to increasing costs of lilacs and materials costs for social media and internet presence, fees for the monthly educational programs and rent for the meeting rooms, we are seeking grant funding so the club can continue to sell the lilacs at a reasonable while the commitment to community projects remains and is expanded.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

- Is the event open to the general public?  Yes  No  
 Do you intend to apply for a liquor license for this project?  Yes  No  
 Will any revenues from this event be returned to the community?  Yes  No

Have you requested grant funding in the past?

Yes  No

If yes, provide grant awards for past 5 years:

2025 - \$2000.00  
2024 - \$2000.00  
2023 - \$2000.00  
2022 - \$2000.00  
2021 - \$2000.00

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

Lilacs are ordered in the fall prior to the spring sale. When they are received from the grower in early spring, approximately 30 club members sort, trim and pot the bare root plans about 6 weeks prior to the actual sale. Potting soil and containers are purchased through the Park District. The plants are then stored in the Park District greenhouse areas until sale time. The Lilac Sale, held in Lilacia Park, begins at 12 noon on the Thursday prior to Mother's Day and ends when the last plant is sold. By the end of the sale, nearly every one of the 100+ members has donated time and expertise to make the sale a success.

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

The funds will go toward the purchase of the lilacs and associated items, such as pots, potting soil, labels and containers.

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)?

Specialty cultivars continue to be added as well as additional bushes of the most popular lilacs. For the 2020 and 2022 sales, orders were taken online which offered buyers convenience in ordering and paying. In-person pickup was prescheduled with allowed an effective timetable for volunteers who loaded the purchases into vehicles. In 2022, a hybrid sale was conducted, with half of the lilacs offered online and the other held in-person. The 2023 sale returned to in-person sales for all the lilacs which met community demand as well as contributed to community awareness and support. The 2025 sale was also in-person sales and this will continue in 2026. In recent years, the Park District takes advantage of public awareness of the lilac sale since they hold a plant sale at the same time and adjacent location.

#### LOCATION

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

Lilacia Park

#### 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.

Late summer/fall 2025 – Lilacs were ordered  
March/April 2026 – Lilacs will be received, sorted, labeled and potted  
May 7, 2026 – Sale will be held from 12 noon – 7 pm  
May 8, 2026 – Sale will be held 9:00 am – 5:00 pm or until sold out  
May 9, 2026 - Sale will start at 9:00 if any lilacs are remaining

### **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.

The sale attracts buyers from the region and surrounding states. As buyers arrive to browse the available 500 plants and 10 trees, we will continue to encourage them to tour Lilacia Park, participate in other Lilac Time events and considered purchasing plants from the Park District sale.

- 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 impact will be positive, as it provides a well-known and appreciated reason to visit Lombard, starting with Lilacia Park. Even during the pandemic restrictions we noted that many visitors and buyers took the opportunity to walk through Lilacia Park, purchase plants from the Park District sale and inquire about places to eat in downtown Lombard. The demand for lilacs has continued, especially as evidenced when the lilacs sold out in 59 minutes in 2025.

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

The target audience is homeowners and gardeners and in general, people who wish to increase their knowledge of lilacs. It's difficult to determine an actual count or attendance, but we estimate 1100-1200 people, since coulee or entire families come to purchase one or two lilac bushes. There will be a total of 500 shrubs and 10 lilac trees for sale, which indicates an estimate of approximately 3 buyers per bush.

- 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.

Employees from Public Works set up signage regarding parking and assist in staging the lilacs and helping to carry the purchases to vehicles. The Village is not reimbursed under this grant.

5) Please describe any collaborative arrangements developed or anticipated with other organizations to

There is a collaborative arrangement with the Lombard Junior Women's Club which coordinates the selection of the Lilac Princess Court. The Garden Club donates a lilac bush to each member of the Lilac Princess Court. There is no charge to those recipients and both organizations receive favorable publicity.

New in 2025, the Chamber of Commerce provided brochures with information about downtown restaurants and these were available at the Lilac Sale. Also, the restaurant – Rosemary and Jean's – provided flyers that gave Lilac Sale day diners a discount on their meal. This offer was quite popular and helped to send customers to the restaurant. In 2026, we hope to include more Lombard *businesses*

fund or otherwise implement the project (including in-kind donations).

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).

Local newspapers: Lombardian, Daily Herald, Suburban News for Lombard  
Online newspapers: Glen Ellyn Patch, Daily Herald, Lombard Spectator  
Quarterly magazine: Garden Glories which is sent to garden club members throughout Illinois

**ONLINE**

Lombard Garden Club website; Facebook; "Anyone that Ever Lived in Lombard," "Happenings in Lombard," "Lombard Forward," "Lombard," "Lombard Garden Club Evening Group"

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Notice on Village's electronic bulletin board  
Inclusion in "Lilac Time" communications produced by the Village

Direct mail to 50 Illinois garden clubs

**POSTERS and FLYERS**

Metra Train Station – Lombard

Lombard Park District – MMAC and Sunset Knoll

Helen Plum Library; Villa Park Library; Glen Ellyn Library

Ace Hardware stores – Lombard and Villa Park – flyers distributed to customers

Local establishments: Lilac Bakery, Carlos' Bakery, Illinois Cleaners, Hacker's Glenbard Gardens

Area restaurants in Lombard, Villa Park, Glen Ellyn

Village of Lombard building entryway

- 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?

If the funding is not received, the Club will use its own receipts to fund the sale; we still anticipate that participation in community projects will continue, but expenditures may have to be adjusted.

**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.



**IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS:** Include an itemized list of all actual and estimated in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions are non-cash donations, contributions or gifts which can be given a cash value (include Village of Lombard in-kind services, where applicable)

	<b>ACTUAL __2024</b>	<b>ACTUAL _2025</b>	<b>ANTICIPATED 2026</b>
Estimated value of in-kind contributions (explain)	\$2600 (total for 260 volunteer hours at \$10/hour)	\$2600 (total for 260 volunteer hours at \$10/hour)	\$2600 (total for 260 volunteer hours at \$10/hour)

**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:**

Since the Club's receipts are less than \$50,000, it is not required to file the federal form 990. A 990N is filed electronically. A copy of the receipts for the 990N is included.
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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:	Sharon Rakowski		
Title or office held:	Member and Grant Writer	Date:	12/8/2025

Signature: Sharon Rakowski