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Downtown Columbus, Near East Side projects awarded Ohio Historic Tax Credits



Image: Sanders Studios

A view of the Columbus skyline with a rendering of the revamped Civic building.

SANDERS STUDIOS



By **Bonnie Meibers** – Staff reporter , Columbus Business First
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Three projects to transform historic Central Ohio buildings were granted states historic tax credits.

The Ohio Department of Development announced on Thursday that redevelopment projects at 145 S. Front St. and 879 Long St. in Columbus and 119 E. Main St. in Somerset (Perry County) will get the credits.

Overall, about 40 projects statewide were granted tax credits.

Downtown Columbus project

The Columbus Partnership and Columbus developer Brad DeHays' project to redevelop the former Ohio Department of Job and Family Services building on Front Street downtown will get \$7.25 million in historic tax credits.

The project, named the Civic, [was awarded tax credits in July](#), but the developers reapplied for the tax credits after costs rose.

"There's been inflation in construction costs and interest rates," DeHays told me. "It changed a lot of dynamics for the project.

The total project cost is estimated at \$73.2 million, up from \$69 million, according to state documents.

DeHays, of Connect Real Estate, is developing the seven-story building for the Partnership, turning the long-vacant limestone building into a mixed-use development with 100 apartments and a cafe overlooking the Scioto River.

The project also calls for rehabbing 26,000 square feet of office space on the ground floor of the building that was constructed in the 1930s.

"This comes at the right time," DeHays said. "We're excited to move forward in 2024 and capitalize on the momentum in downtown Columbus."

Near East Side project

The city of Columbus and developers have been trying to [redevelop the Edna building](#) at 879 E. Long St. since 2017.

The \$4.7 million project will get a \$520,000 tax credit, the state announced.

The Edna was built in 1905 and provided office space for an African American insurance company, a newspaper and a social club; all of which were integral to the city's African American business community centered on East Long Street.

The Central Ohio Community Improvement Corp. owns the building and plans to move its offices into the second and third floors. There is a letter of intent from [Columbus Rising](#) to take some office space on the first floor of the building.

Brian Higgins, a consultant for COCIC on the project, said work already has started on the building, which has many structural challenges, including a leaking roof and partially eroded floor.

The two office tenants will be able to move in about a year from now, Higgins said.

"All these neighborhoods have a past and have had a period of decline. This is a second chance," Higgins said. "So much has happened on Long Street, even in the past five years, that the Edna will just build off of that positive momentum and extend the vitality further."

The Edna was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. It has been vacant since the 1980s.



The Edna building at 879 E. Long St. in the city's King-Lincoln neighborhood.

JOHN LAUER

Elsewhere in Central Ohio, a project to redevelop the Hotel Swisher in Somerset received a \$250,000 tax credit.

The \$4.2 million project would transform the building into a boutique hotel with 15 rooms.

The building once was used as a Swisher Cigar Factory, but it's since housed a grocery, a hardware store and an auto sales shop.