

CITY OF ELECTRA, TEXAS

DOWNTOWN HISTORIC BUILDING RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

The Building Restoration and Improvement Grant Program is designed to stimulate improvements to existing historically significant buildings in the Downtown Business District of the City of Electra, Texas, to promote tourism, to enhance the physical appearance and economic vitality of downtown Electra, and to promote joint public/private investment to complement ongoing historical revitalization efforts.

Program Objectives and Available Assistance

- To make positive, high-impact visual improvements to historically significant commercial buildings by providing an overall enhanced image for downtown Electra, thereby attracting visitors to shop, dine, and do business in the Downtown Business District.
- To provide a maximum of \$20,000 per project as a matching monetary incentive to the owners of historically significant commercial properties in the Downtown Business District for high-quality improvements to their properties.
- In all cases, the applicant must provide matching funds at a ratio of one to one (1:1); meaning that, for every \$1.00 the applicant invests in the renovation or improvement of the subject property, the City will reimburse \$1.00 of qualified expenditures, up to the maximum grant authorized by the City Commission not to exceed \$20,000 per project.

Eligibility Requirements

- Historic buildings within the downtown improvement area (map attached) that are of a commercial, retail, service, or professional use are eligible to participate in the program. Projects that include residential development of a portion of the building are also eligible when visually appropriate for the Downtown Electra Historical District.
- The building to be improved must have historical significance or contribute to the historical significance of the Downtown Electra Historical District.

Minimum Guidelines

- The City's Design Review Board will make project recommendations to the City Commission. **The City Commission will have final approval on all applications.**
- Building improvements should maintain the character of the downtown area; and the design drawings must be approved by the Design Review Committee in order to access funding for improvement.
- Improvements to be undertaken shall conform to the City's Codes and any other policies and regulations applying to the subject property.
- **Retroactive applications will not be accepted.** Applicants must consult with City staff before work begins to define a project scope.
- Program funds shall be made available only to projects that enhance and are sensitive to the historical nature of the structure.
- For properties with multiple storefronts, it is recommended that the façade treatment provide a cohesive theme while also allowing for some distinctive design elements to the various businesses, such as signage, exposing transom windows, lighting, flower boxes, murals, etc., to provide better street visibility and promote economic development downtown.

- For corner buildings fronting more than one street, improvements must be made to each frontage if determined necessary by City staff.

Application Prioritization

Funding is limited, and project applications will be prioritized on a first-come, first-served basis.

Eligible Improvements

To enhance your application it is encouraged that applicants follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation, available at the web address below:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/tax/rhb/stand.htm>

Eligible improvements must be permanent in nature as determined exclusively by the City of Electra, Texas. All improvements must be consistent with the codes and ordinances of the City of Electra, Texas, and other applicable laws. Eligible costs include the cost of materials, equipment, and contracted labor to complete eligible improvements, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Roof repair or reconstruction
- Repair of exterior walls, including cleaning, sealing, tuck pointing and painting
- Permanent commercial site (exterior) improvements including murals & artwork with historical relevance
- Installation, repair, and replacement of exit (exterior) doors and hardware
- Repair, replacement, or addition of exterior shutters and awnings/canopies
- Repair, replacement or purchase of signs (when performed as part of an overall façade improvement)
- Repair or replacement of frames, sills, glazing, replacement of glass and installation of new windows
- Installation of permanently affixed landscaping, such as stone or brick planters

The City will prioritize projects. Consideration will be given to (1) importance of the structure to the overall goals of the program, (2) structural integrity and condition, and (3) cost effectiveness of the proposed work. In determining the grant amount, the City will also consider the time required to complete the project. Applicants are requested to limit their requests to projects that can be completed in a twelve (12) month period.

Ineligible Improvements

- Real estate or building purchases
- Furnishings and equipment purchases
- Working capital
- Inventory financing
- Title reports and legal fees
- Professional fees such as architects, engineers, and solicitors
- Labor provided by the Applicant or tenant of the building
- Extermination of insects, rodents, vermin and other pests
- Expenses incurred prior to grant application approval. Improvements cannot be undertaken before grant application approval.

Application Process

Program Application forms are available in the Main Street Office and at City Hall. The application process is as follows:

- After reviewing the program guidelines, the Applicant will meet with City staff to discuss the desired work to be undertaken. If the proposed work is within the program guidelines, as determined exclusively by City staff, a completed application is submitted to the City. Written bids, sketches, color samples, and material supplies should be included, as outlined in the application and checklist. It is encouraged that the applicant contact the Main Street Office(940) 495-3758, for information on available resources for design consultations and project renderings if needed.
- Once approved by City Staff, the applicant must schedule a meeting with the Design Review Commission to receive their approval of the project.
- The City will consider the recommendations made by the City staff and the Design Review Commission, and will make its decision in a public meeting. As noted on the application form, grant awards will be based on the low bid submitted; however, the Commission may allow the applicant to accept another qualified bid if willing to assume the additional project cost.
- With the Commission's approval, the Applicant may proceed with the planned building improvements pursuant to the approved design and issued permits. All payments for the work should be made by the Applicant and supported by clearly defined invoices outlining eligible work. Work shall commence within ninety (90) days of the approval date of the building permits. Extensions may be granted solely at the discretion of City staff.
- City staff will monitor the ongoing progress during construction to ensure that the work is performed according to the approved application and plans. No changes to work shall be made without the written consent of both the Applicant and the City. Approved "Change in Work" forms will be attached to the original application, dated and signed by the City Administrator. Deviations from approved plans and specifications may disqualify the Applicant from this grant program.
- Funds will be disbursed upon completion of the project. City staff will conduct a final inspection before the grant funds will be disbursed to the Applicant. A Certificate of Approval will be issued to the Applicant.
- Reimbursement claims for all eligible expenses must be submitted with the following supporting documents.
 - A completed "Grant Reimbursement Request Form" supplied by the City of Electra, Texas
 - Any applicable planning and building permits
 - Cancelled checks and paid invoices/receipts for eligible work
- After final approval of the improvements, the grant reimbursement will be processed. Allow thirty (30) days for receipt of the grant check.
- After the work is completed, Applicant shall display a sign or banner (provided by the City) indicating participation in the City of Electra, Texas Downtown Historic Building Restoration and Improvement Grant Program. The sign or banner shall be displayed either on the exterior or in the front window of the building for a period of thirty (30) days.

Revision of November 9, 2010

(Map of Downtown Electra Historical District attached)