
DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

Main Street Brownsville



Program Guidelines

Main Street Brownsville has established a Downtown Beautification Program that provides small grants to property owners seeking to improve the façades of vacant commercial buildings located within the Main Street District in Downtown Brownsville.

The Downtown Beautification Program aims to encourage quality redevelopment in downtown Brownsville. In an effort to achieve a concentrated impact on blight and complement the City's current downtown revitalization efforts, the Program's primary focus is on the vacant commercial buildings located in the Revitalization Area around Market Square (see Figure 1).

Objectives for Revitalization Area

- Reduce blight and prevent further deterioration of commercial buildings.
- Preserve the original character of buildings.
- Reduce vacancies in storefronts and upper floors.
- Encourage private investment in commercial buildings.
- Improve economic vitality of downtown.
- Stimulate future economic investment in downtown.

Program Funding

The Downtown Beautification Program is partially funded by the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC). Funding is limited and grants will be subject to funding availability.

Program Description

The Downtown Beautification Program offers small grants not to exceed \$5,000 to property owners of vacant commercial buildings. Façade restoration will be based on historic photographs, original drawings, and other local historical artifacts. Only projects that are located in the Revitalization Area around Market Square are eligible (see Figure 1). A cash match of \$500 **and** an in-kind contribution of \$500 is required. Acceptable in-kind contributions may include additional rehabilitation work not included in the scope of work, cleaning of the interior of the building and/or exterior property, and connecting utilities for a pop-up shop, etc. All in-kind contributions must be approved by the Ad Hoc Committee that will review the application.

Program Eligibility

Ownership. The applicant shall comply with the following:

- Provide proof of ownership of the property in the form of a warranty deed, fee simple title or mortgage

documents.

- Property taxes must be current.
- All accounts must be in good standing with the City (no outstanding fines, debts or liens).
- Property cannot have current code enforcement violations that would not be mitigated by the project.

Revitalization Area. Property owners of vacant commercial property located in the Revitalization Area around Market Square are eligible to participate (see Figure 1).

Prior Grant Recipient. A property owner will be ineligible for the program if the proposed property has been rehabilitated with public funds within the last five (5) years.

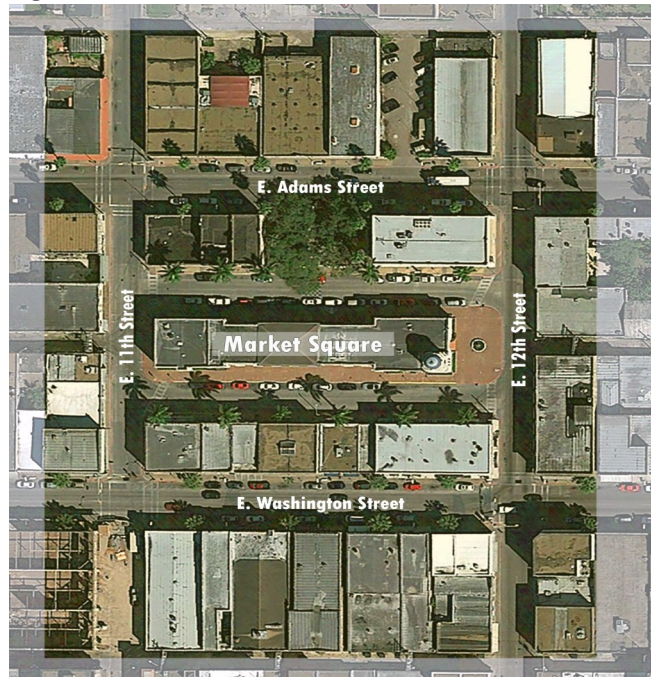
Other Considerations. Any existing building within the Revitalization area, regardless of condition, could benefit from a façade grant however, because of limited program funding, a building that is structurally sound and is in need of only cosmetic improvements provides the most value to the program and will have higher priority.

Eligible Activities

The Downtown Beautification Project grant may be used for following eligible activities:

- Painting of the facade
- Cleaning of the exterior of building;
- Removal of debris/awnings;
- Artistic renderings that highlight the building's historical significance or illustrate the building's potential commercial use.

Figure 1. Revitalization Area



Application Process

Application Review. All applications will be reviewed by an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of the Planning Director or designee, Historic Preservation Officer, Downtown District Manager, the project manager of the Downtown Beautification Program, and the BCIC Director or designee. All applications must be submitted to the Planning and Development Services Department located at 1034 E. Levee Street, Attn: Main Street Brownsville.

Evaluation Criteria. Projects will be subject to threshold review to determine eligibility. Threshold criteria include:

- Applications shall be complete and include necessary attachments.
- Applicants shall be in good standing with the City (no outstanding fines, debts or liens).

Applications meeting the threshold criteria will be scored according to the following selection criteria:

- Rehabilitation of historic properties that are in danger of loss due to neglect.
- Rehabilitation that addresses immediate health and safety concerns.
- Rehabilitation that corrects code violations.
- Rehabilitation of vacant commercial buildings that will improve the aesthetic of the Main Street District .

Project Selection. Applicants will be notified in writing of the final status of the application. If the application is approved, the applicant will work with City staff to develop the scope of work for the project. The scope of work will be subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation and Design Review Board before any work can begin. Once the scope of work is approved by all parties, the applicant will enter into an agreement with the City stipulating the terms and conditions of participation.

Contractor Selection. Once the scope of work has been approved by all parties, the City's procurement process will be utilized to obtain bids for the project. One sole contractor will be selected to complete all projects that have qualified to participate in the Downtown Beautification Program.

Program Requirements

Promotional Rights. By accepting the FIP grant, the applicant authorizes the City to promote the project and property including, but not limited to, displaying a sign at the site during and after construction indicating participation in the program, and using photographs and descriptions of the project and property in the City's

printed promotional materials, press releases, and websites. Additionally, the applicant agrees to recognize the Main Street Brownsville program and BCIC in all marketing, outreach, advertising, and public relations related to the project as being funded by Main Street Brownsville and BCIC.

Project Maintenance. By accepting the grant, the applicant agrees to properly maintain all facade improvements for a minimum of 5 years at the applicant's own cost and expense. Any damage to the facade is to be repaired immediately by the applicant so that the property remains in good condition.

The applicant will be strongly encouraged to touch up painted areas and perform any other repairs needed on an ongoing basis and to maintain the building appearance (i.e. the cleaning of awnings and window glass).

The applicant also agrees to reimburse the City if the improvements included in the project scope are removed within five (5) years of project completion.

Historic Preservation

Nearly every building within Brownsville's Historic District is historically significant. Each building should be considered on its own merits and proposed modifications should be carefully considered. Modifications that contribute to the significance of downtown Brownsville's architectural character should be retained and preserved. It is preferable to retain existing materials and significant components whenever possible, by stabilizing, repairing, or matching them with compatible new materials rather than by replacing them. It is very important to realize that most of the original materials that make up the City's historic fabric are often irreplaceable or only replaceable with significant labor and energy costs.

Additional considerations include:

- Any existing historical character of a property should be retained and preserved to the extent possible and feasible.
- The removal of historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property are not permitted.
- Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting and power washing, that cause damage to historic materials, are not permitted.
- The surface cleaning of structures should be undertaken using the gentlest means possible as per the U.S. Secretary of Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation. Often, a bucket of soapy water and a brush are the best tools to use.



DOWNTOWN BEAUTIFICATION



Program Application

APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION

Property Owner Name	
Mailing Address	
Phone Number	
Email	

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Historic/Building Name				
Building Address				
Historically Designated	<input type="checkbox"/> Local	<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Year Built _____
Previous Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Retail <input type="checkbox"/> Office <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			
What is the proposed future use of the building?	<input type="checkbox"/> Retail <input type="checkbox"/> Office <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

- Proof of ownership: Warranty deed , simple fee title, or mortgage documents
- Copy of driver’s license
- Proof of insurance on the property
- Proof of property tax payment
- Color photographs of the façade, submitted digitally on a USB and hard copies included in the application
- One (1) page narrative describing in detail the proposed work and the in-kind contribution that will provided

APPLICANT AGREEMENT & CERTIFICATION

- I have read and fully understand the guidelines and procedures of the Downtown Beautification Program.
- I understand that any false or misleading information provided at any time during the application process may lead to program ineligibility.
- I understand that any deviation from the requirements set forth in this agreement may result in having to reimburse the City of Brownsville and all associated entities.
- I agree to start the project within thirty (30) days of receiving the Notice to Proceed.
- I agree to complete the project within five (5) months of receiving the Notice to Proceed.
- I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the City of Brownsville and its employees, directors, officials, and other duly authorized agents from any and all claims and liabilities arising out of or connected to my participation in this program and the ensuing façade improvement work, including any personal injuries or damages to any person(s) or property, loss to or interruption of business by the program participant and participant’s tenants and neighbors. This agreement extends to the program participant’s employees, duly authorized agents and successors.

The undersigned hereby represents and certifies to the best of his/her knowledge and belief that the information contained on this statement and any exhibits or attachments hereto are true and complete and accurately describe the proposed project, and the undersigned agrees to promptly inform the City of Brownsville of any changes in the proposed project which may occur.

Applicant’s Printed Name + Signature

Date