

Vernon Main Street Facade Grant Program Guidelines

12/4/2015

INTRODUCTION:

The architectural quality of downtown Vernon is important to the entire town, its history, image, and economy. Proper improvements to the appearances of individual buildings will help develop the appropriate image of downtown Vernon. Therefore, it is important that an organized and coordinated approach to improvements be followed.

The Vernon Main Street Program has developed a Facade Grant Program to provide assistance to property owners in the rehabilitation of historic downtown Vernon. This grant program is available to eligible property owners and tenants within the boundaries of Vernon's Main Street District (see Appendix B - Map of the Vernon Main Street District). This procedure outlines the scope, guidelines, and administrative procedures of this program. By following this procedure, applicants can ensure that their projects are eligible to utilize available downtown rehabilitation incentives and enhance the image of downtown as a special place to work, shop, and socialize.

Questions regarding this procedure of the Facade Grant Program in general should be directed to the following:

Program Administrator
Amanda Lehman, Director
Vernon Main Street Program
1725 Wilbarger Street
Vernon, Texas 76384
(940) 552-2581

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Facade Grant Program is to provide economic incentives to:

1. Renovate buildings in downtown Vernon.
2. Encourage good design projects that capitalize on rehabilitation of the original fabric or design of existing properties; and
3. Preserve the unique character of downtown Vernon.

ELIGIBILITY:

Owners or tenants of buildings located within the area shown on the attached map are eligible to apply for a façade grant. If the application is submitted by a tenant, it must be signed by the property owner.

If a single building is divided into multiple business spaces, it is considered to be one property. A project is deemed ineligible for funding if work begins before the application is reviewed and approved.

To be eligible to receive funding through this Program, a project must involve the preservation of an historic building. For the purpose of this Program, the City of Vernon defines "historic building" as either:

1. a building that is over 50 years old, or
2. a building that meets the department of interior's definition of an historic property: "a district, site, building, structure or object significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology or culture at the national, State, or local level".

In conjunction with the award of any grant under this Program, the Vernon City Commission must issue a finding of fact that, in the opinion of the City Commission, the proposed project meets this definition.

Projects eligible for façade grants are limited to the following types of work:

- Safe cleaning of brick or wall surfaces
- Masonry repair
- Painting (only if brick surface has been previously painted)
- Repair, reconstruction, and/or replacement of original architectural details
- Replacement of non-historic doors and/or windows
- Rehabilitation of historic doors and/or windows
- Removal of siding and exterior false facades
- Rehabilitation or compatible reconstruction of a store front
- Installation or removal of signage
- Installation or removal of awnings
- Repair, installation or re-installation of roofs
- Repairs associated with restoring or maintaining the structural stability of the building.

Façade grants will not be issued for the following projects. (Please note that this list is not intended to be all inclusive and the Vernon Main Street Advisory Board and Vernon City Commission will evaluate the merit of each project on an individual basis):

- General maintenance
- Interior rehabilitation, except when such interior rehab' is needed in order to restore or maintain the structural stability of the building
- Installation of any type of aluminum, vinyl, stone, stucco, or other inappropriate materials that interfere with the historic integrity of the building
- Sandblasting of exterior bricks unless expressly authorized
- Removal of historic features
- Installation or removal of landscaping, unless the installation or removal of such landscape fixtures or plantings are necessary in order to match the original building design.

If a property has received an active façade grant, that grant may be transferred from one party to another. The new owner is eligible to assume the active façade grant award attached to that property, upon written request indicating that said property or business owner understands the terms of the contract and will assume any responsibilities pertaining to it. Failure of the new property owner to provide a request within 30 days of the date the property is transferred will result in revocation of the grant award.

FUNDING:

The Façade Grant Program is made possible through The Vernon Main Street Program. Projects are eligible for a grant reimbursement for up to 50% of the project cost not to exceed \$10,000. Applicants will receive grant funds upon the completion and final approval of the project.

Grants will be awarded for eligible projects on a funds-available basis.

GUIDELINES:

Applications will be reviewed in accordance with the following guidelines. Successful applicants are responsible for ensuring that projects are constructed in accordance with information provided on the application as reflected in these guidelines:

1. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see Appendix A) must be adhered to in all proposed projects.
2. Renovations must conform to the zoning and building codes required by the City of Vernon and the State of Texas.
3. All work must be completed in a good workmanship manner.
4. Projects are required to comply with Vernon Main Street's Design Standards.

5. Plans for rehabilitation of structures must respect the architectural integrity of the entire building and the neighboring streetscape.
6. The quality of building materials varies widely, and grant recipients must use the highest quality facing materials possible. Materials that are compatible in quality, texture, finish, and dimension, to those that were used originally on the building, or originally in the project area, are encouraged.
7. Façade grants will not be used as a partial solution to buildings in obvious disrepair and neglect. For these properties, the applicant must show a comprehensive proposal for the entire building's rehabilitation that would meet the City of Vernon's building and zoning code in order to bring the property into occupiable condition.
8. The Vernon Main Street Program will not be a party in negotiations between the applicant and contractors employed by the applicant. The applicant agrees to hold the Vernon Main Street Program harmless of any defects in workmanship, liability, damages, or other costs relative to this project.

CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION REVIEW:

All eligible rehabilitation or renovation proposals will be considered for funding, but top priority will be given to projects that would make a highly visible contribution to the enhancement of downtown Vernon. Applications will be evaluated based on compliance with the guidelines outlined above and the merits of the proposed project in relation to other applications under consideration by the Vernon Main Street Program. Also, the Vernon Main Street program, will not be under any obligation to award any grant, and the Vernon Main Street program reserves the right to reject any application for any reason, or to reject it without cause.

Design assistance for applicants is available through Vernon's Main Street Program and the Texas Main Street Program. To the extent that free design assistance is offered to the applicant, the applicant can utilize this assistance in preparing their application to ensure that the proposed project complies with the design guidelines. Applications that receive design assistance from the Main Street Program will not necessarily be approved. Main Street Program contact information is provided below:

Vernon Main Street Program
Amanda Lehman, Director
(940) 552-2581
1725 Wilbarger Street
Vernon, TX 76384

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Following is the procedure for the review of applications and disbursement of grant funds:

1. Owner/Tenant meets with Vernon Main Street Staff to discuss proposed grant application and request design assistance from Vernon and/or Texas Main Street staff – this support may include the preparation of sketches or renderings showing/describing the proposed restoration work – see requirement below.
2. Owner/Tenant completes the Façade Grant Application, has it signed by the owner, and submits it to the Vernon Main Street Office along with the following information:
 - a. Application Form
 - b. Sketches
 - c. Photos
 - d. Detailed written description of the proposed renovations
 - e. Design plans (if necessary)
 - f. Two estimates of project cost
 - g. Projected date to start the project and of completion
2. Proposed projects will be reviewed by the Vernon Main Street staff to determine if the project is eligible for a façade grant. If the application is eligible for a grant, then the staff of the Vernon Main Street Program will assist the applicant in completing the grant application. Then, when the application is completed, it will be placed on the agenda for the next Vernon Main Street Advisory Board meeting. The project applicant will be notified when the application will be considered by the Vernon Main Street Advisory Board. The Main Street Advisory Board will not make the final approval decision, but will, instead, only make a recommendation of approval to the Vernon City Commission.
3. The Vernon City Commission will review the proposed project at their regularly scheduled meeting and decide whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the façade grant application.
4. The applicant will be notified of The City Commission's decision. If the Application is approved, the Main Street Program staff will prepare an agreement that outlines the obligations of both the grant recipient and the Main Street Program with respect to the grant award. It is this agreement that conditionally obligates the Main Street Program to pay out the grant.

5. Projects must be completed within 6 months from the projected start date as identified on the contract signed by both parties. Failure to complete the project by the 6 month deadline without an approved extension could result in loss of funding.
6. Applicants who cannot complete the required work within 6 months can request an extension.

Applicants who require an extension should submit a written request to The Vernon Main Street office providing a compelling reason(s), based on extenuating circumstances, why they were unable to complete the work within the contracted period. The Vernon Main Street Director shall, in his sole discretion, determine if such an extension to the work completion deadline is warranted, and he/she shall notify the applicant of his/her decision.

7. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the project is completed in accordance with the approved application and design guidelines provided in this procedure. Vernon Main Street Program or its funding partners reserve the right to deny payment, if the completed work is inconsistent with the contents of the original application. Any deviations from the approved application must be approved by the Vernon Main Street office prior to construction.
8. Once the entire completed project is approved by the Vernon Main Street office, the applicant will provide copies of paid statements along with photos of the completed work. Vernon Main Street, or another funding partner, if applicable, will reimburse the applicant for up to 50% of the improvements completed to its reasonable satisfaction, not to exceed the total amount of the grant award.

APPENDIX A

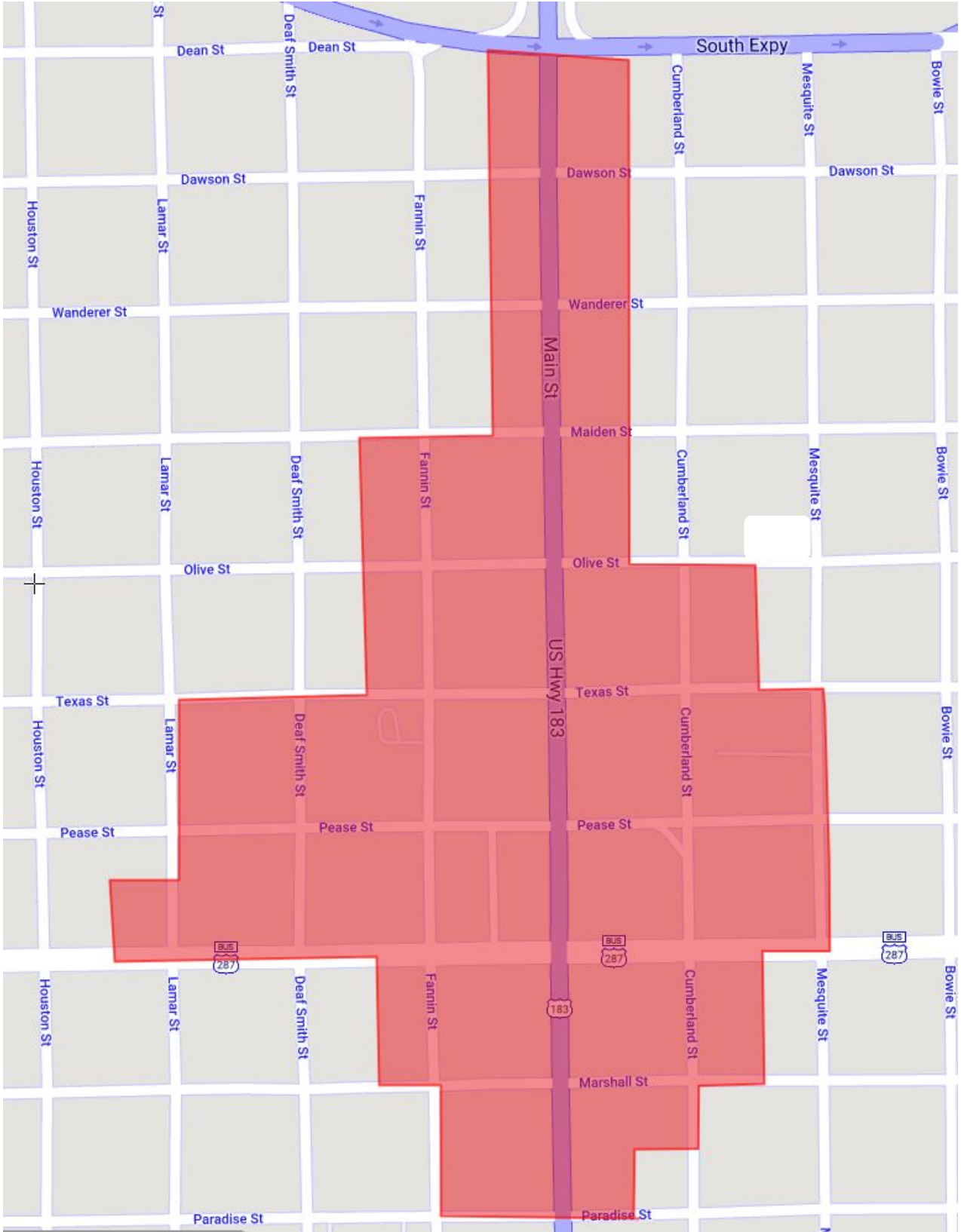
The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The 1992 version of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation reads as follows:

1. The property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
6. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
7. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
8. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
9. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.
10. Archeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

APPENDIX B

Map of the Vernon Main Street District



Vernon Main Street Facade Grant Program Application
Schedule Appointment with Main Street Director to go over application.

Date Received: _____

Date Approved: _____

PROJECT NAME			
GRANT FUNDS REQUEST	\$	MAX. \$10,000 & 50% MAX. MATCH	
PROJECT DESCRIPTION			
SITE ADDRESS			

APPLICANT	<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING OWNER <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS OWNER/TENANT		
NAME:		DAY PH.	
MAILING ADDRESS:			
E-MAIL:		CELL PH.	

Building Owner			
NAME:		DAY PH.	
MAILING ADDRESS:			
E-MAIL:		CELL PH.	

PROJECT INFO			
START DATE	_____	TOTAL PROJECT COST \$	
		<small>Identify & Breakdown costs in the boxes provided below.</small>	
COMPLETION DATE	_____	\$	\$
MATCH %		\$	\$
MATCH REQUEST	\$	\$	\$

**Clarify costs in your application.*

PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS PART OF YOUR APPLICATION:

1. Façade Improvement Agreement with signatures of the building owner (or owners) and applicable business/tenant with a designated storefront
2. Architectural rendering of the design, or other materials to portray the improvement(s) proposed.
3. "Before" photograph(s),
4. Special design boards and/or materials (ie. paint sample chips, tile samples, pictures)
5. Two contractor bid estimates for proposed work in an itemized format.

Vernon Main Street Façade Grant Agreement

The undersigned building owner(s) and business owners/tenants(s) acknowledge the applicant as _____ and affirms that:
Applicant name(s)

1. The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge.
2. I (we) have read and understand the Vernon Main Street Façade Grant Guidelines.
3. I (we) agree to comply with all requirements and conditions.

A. Printed Property Owner Name*: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Property Owner Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**Owner as determined by the Wilbarger County Tax Assessor's Office*

B. Printed Business Owner/Tenant Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Business Owner/Tenant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____