

VERNON MAIN STREET SIDEWALK 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 and streetscapes 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 Sidewalk Grant Program to provide assistance to property owners in the rehabilitation of sidewalks in 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 Sidewalk 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) 552-2564

PURPOSE:

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

1. Improve the streetscape in downtown Vernon
2. Ensure safety along downtown sidewalks for pedestrians
3. Encourage good design projects that capitalize on rehabilitation of the original fabric or design of existing properties; and
4. 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 Sidewalk 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 rehabilitation of a sidewalk on the property of a historic building in the Vernon Main Street District that has a business open to the public.

The Main Street Coordinator and/or City of Vernon Code Department must deem the sidewalk damaged and/or unsafe.

In conjunction with the award of any grant under the Main Street Sidewalk Grant 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.

If a property has received an active Sidewalk grant, that grant may be transferred from one party to another. The new owner is eligible to assume the active Sidewalk 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 Sidewalk Grant Program is made possible through The Vernon Main Street Program and the City of Vernon. Projects are eligible for a grant reimbursement for up to 50% of the project cost not to exceed \$6,250. 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. Sidewalks and Curbs will be constructed in accordance with the specifications and designs established by the Texas Department of Transportation Roadway and Design Manual.
2. The Main Street Coordinator, City of Vernon Code Enforcement and the individuals in charge of the project will review the project before work begins, once the space has been framed just before concrete is poured and following the completion of the project.
3. An individual experienced in concrete labor must evaluate the framing and complete the concrete work.
4. Renovations must conform to the zoning and building codes required by the City of Vernon and the State of Texas.
5. All work must be completed in a good workmanship manner (ex. timely, keeps area as clean as possible during construction, respects neighbor's property, and keeps pedestrian safety in mind during the construction process).
6. Projects are required to comply with Vernon Main Street's design standards.
7. Plans for rehabilitation of structures must respect the architectural integrity of the entire property and the neighboring streetscape.
8. The quality of building materials varies widely, and grant recipients must use the highest quality 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.
9. Sidewalk grants will not be awarded to properties where the building is 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.
10. 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 sidewalk rehabilitation 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) 552-2564
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.
2. Owner/Tenant completes the Sidewalk 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. Photos
 - c. Detailed written description of the proposed project
 - d. Design plans (if necessary)
 - e. Two estimates of project cost
 - f. Projected date to start the project and of completion

3. Proposed projects will be reviewed by the Vernon Main Street staff to determine if the project is eligible for a Sidewalk 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.
4. The Vernon City Commission will review the proposed project at their regularly scheduled meeting and decide whether to approve the approved conditions, or deny the Sidewalk grant application.
5. 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.
6. Projects must be completed within 6 weeks from the projected start date as identified on the contract signed by both parties. Failure to complete the project by the 6 week deadline without an approved extension could result in loss of funding.
7. Applicants who cannot complete the required work within 6 weeks can request an extension.

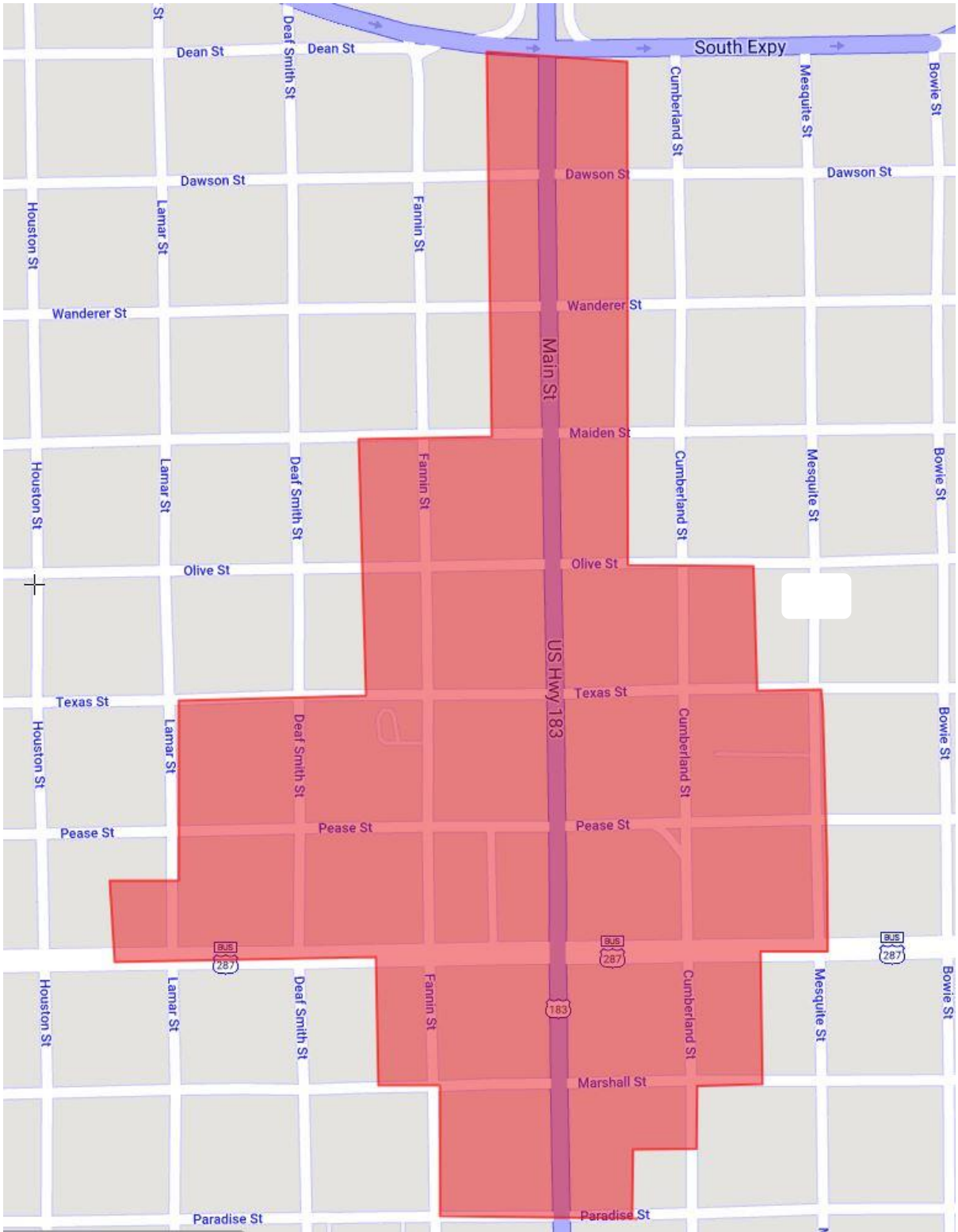
Applicants who require an extension should submit a written request to The Vernon Main Street office providing a compelling reason(s), based on extenuating circumstances, why they were unable to complete the work within the contracted period. The Vernon Main Street Director shall, in his sole discretion,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

8. 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.

9. 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 B
Map of the Vernon Main Street District



Vernon Main Street Sidewalk Grant Program Application

Schedule Appointment with Main Street Director to go over application.

Date Received: _____

Date Approved: _____

PROJECT NAME			
GRANT FUNDS REQUEST	\$		<i>MAX. \$6,250 & 50% MAX. MATCH</i>
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 \$	
		Identify & Breakdown costs in the boxes provided below.	
COMPLETION DATE	_____	\$	\$
MATCH %	%	\$	\$
MATCH REQUEST	\$	\$	\$

**Clarify costs in your application.*

PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS PART OF YOUR APPLICATION:

1. Sidewalk Grant 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. Photos of special features such as landscaping, stamping and/or planter space
5. Two contractor bid estimates for proposed work in an itemized format.

Vernon Main Street Sidewalk 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 Sidewalk 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:** _____