

# DICKINSON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION VISUAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

## PROGRAM PURPOSE

The broad purpose of the Visual Improvement Program (“VIP”) is to promote a positive City image reflecting order, harmony and pride thereby strengthening the economic stability in Dickinson business areas. The foremost purpose is to encourage the visual improvement and enhancement of facades, business signage, and landscaping for commercial, professional and retail in Dickinson.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The program affects only building exteriors and does not account for interior spaces except for window display areas that are on public view. The design standards are meant to be flexible enough to allow business or property owners to be creative and design storefronts that market their establishments effectively. At the same time, aspects of the program will help to avoid poor quality design decisions that detract from the aesthetics of the business areas. The program also provides an objective basis by which to evaluate projects that come up for review. Ultimately, the design, renovation and repair projects will enhance the economic success of Dickinson by making it a more inviting place for shoppers and businesses.

## PROGRAM FUNDING

Funding is based on a reimbursement of up to a maximum of \$4,000.00 per business. The cumulative amount awarded by the Dickinson Economic Development Corporation (“DEDC”) shall not exceed \$40,000.00 for the fiscal year of this program.

## ELIGIBILITY

Either the property owner (corporation, joint venture, partnership, et al) or the business owner (tenant) is eligible for funding. Property owners with multiple buildings or tenants with multiple operating locations may be limited to one building or location per funding cycle.

Tenants: Tenants must submit to DEDC written authorization by property owner(s) to make the indicated improvements.

Property Owners: Property owner(s) must submit proof of ownership for the property.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Projects are reviewed on a competitive basis. Page 4 outlines the rating criteria by which each submitted project is assessed. Those projects with the highest weighted average will be granted funding. Applicants must be able to complete construction within 90 calendar days of approval/award notice unless otherwise approved by the Board. Any outstanding liens or property taxes for the City of Dickinson will be considered and may negatively affect the funding decision of the DEDC.

## REIMBURSABLE EXPENDITURES

Should the project and contractors receive approval from the Board, the DEDC will pass a Resolution for funding of the Project of up to \$4,000.00. Additionally, applicant will be required to enter into a VIP Agreement with DEDC for the Project which will also be approved by Resolution of the Board. Should the project exceed \$4,000.00, the applicant is responsible for paying all additional costs incurred on behalf of the Project. The DEDC may issue a deposit to an approved contractor for the Project in an amount not to exceed 25% of the project award prior to project commencement. An approved VIP Agreement may be assigned to a lending institution to obtain additional funding for an approved Project.

No partially completed project will receive funding. A project must be completed in its entirety as reflected on the application submitted for consideration to the DEDC. **All projects must be completed within 90 calendar days of approval of a VIP Agreement by Resolution of the DEDC Board.**

Upon completion of the Project, applicant shall submit for reimbursement of the Project award in accordance with the terms of the approved VIP Agreement for the Project, including providing a copy of all receipts and a release of liens showing that all contractors and vendors for the Project have been paid in full.

## QUALIFYING PROJECTS

Projects qualifying for reimbursement are limited to exterior building facades, except for window display areas that are on public view. Projects that may qualify for reimbursement include, but are not limited to, improvements to the exterior of buildings such a painting, cleaning, tuck pointing, façade and window repair/replacement, use of masonry facades (excluding hardy plank), entrance upgrades/doors, new or replaced awnings, doorways, lighting, new or replacement signage, window tinting, permanent landscaping, green (eco-friendly) enhancements, parking lots and rear access renovation. Other renovations may qualify for the VIP Program as determined by the DEDC Board of Directors. **Please note: construction or replacement of parking lots when not combined with other improvements such as landscaping are not qualifying projects for the VIP.** In no way is this program intended to exempt a business from compliance with any section of the City of Dickinson's current ordinances.

## **APPLICATION AND PERMITTING ASSISTANCE**

Prior to submitting an application, all interested parties are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with the Economic Development Coordinator to obtain additional information about the program, to obtain assistance in completing the application, and to familiarize you with building codes, ordinances, licensing, permits and inspections requirements that may apply to the project being considered. DEDC and City Staff are available to offer assistance with all types of permit applications and licensing that may be necessary for projects submitted, to offer you guidance in submitting plans for review, and to provide information related to building codes and ordinances.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The VIP application process is continual throughout the year. **Completed applications, including required attachments, must be returned to the DEDC Office not later than 5:00 pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of any month to be eligible for presentation to the DEDC Board the following month.** This will allow Staff to conduct a preliminary review of the application to present to the DEDC Board of Directors for consideration and approval at the regular monthly meeting.

Documents may be hand delivered or mailed to:

Dickinson Economic Development Corporation  
Attn: Visual Improvement Program  
218 FM 517 West  
Dickinson, TX 77539

## **RELATED PARTIES**

No member of the City Council of the City of Dickinson, Dickinson Economic Development Corporation, or any member of any Dickinson boards, commissions, City employees or any member of their immediate family may participate in this program.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Below is the evaluation criteria and point system that will be used to evaluate each of the submitted projects:

<b>Evaluation Factor</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Score</b>
Professional quality of design	10	
Consistency of design with business activity, design guidelines, and surrounding commercial structures	20	
Proposed improvements are sufficient to improve the aesthetics of the structure/site	30	
Improvement of property will significantly impact the revitalization efforts of the City	40	
<b>TOTAL SCORE RECEIVED</b>	100	

## **VISUAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM CHECKLIST**

- ✓ Attend Pre-Application Meeting with DEDC and City Staff
- ✓ Complete Visual Improvement Program Application
- ✓ Submit an outline and/or illustration of proposed improvements
- ✓ Property owners: Show proof of ownership
- ✓ Tenants: Obtain property owner's letter of authorization
- ✓ Provide two 4x6 photos of existing structure and area(s) for improvements

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Dickinson Economic Development Corporation	(281) 337-6105
Dickinson Community Development Department	(281) 337-6259

**DICKINSON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
VISUAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
APPLICATION**

APPLICANT – TENANT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Building Address: \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT – PROPERTY OWNER

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(If partnership, corporation, etc., list each officer name and title)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the building/property owner interested in making improvements?  Yes  No

Does building/property owner have a business in the building?  Yes  No

If yes, what is the Business Name? \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER BUSINESSES IN BUILDING

Please list other businesses in the building for which the application is being submitted and check those interested in participating in the Visual Improvement Program:

Name of Business	Name of Owner



**FUNDING STRUCTURE**

Please designate the dollar amount being requested:

I am interested in applying for a Visual Improvement Program Grant for a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in grant funds. I request \$\_\_\_\_\_ of this total amount as an upfront payment to purchase materials or to be paid directly to my selected contractor. I request that the remainder of the total amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ be reimbursed to me upon submission of invoices and a request for payment to the DEDC.

Project Estimated Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Estimated Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURES**

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions set forth in the Visual Improvement Program Guidelines. I understand that my project will be evaluated and recommendations made as to the scope of work to be included in the Visual Improvement Program and that I may be required to provide additional information in order for DEDC to evaluate my project for funding. I understand that the submittal of this application in no way guarantees me a grant from the Dickinson Economic Development Corporation. I further understand that, if my project is approved for funding by DEDC, I will be required to enter into a Visual Improvement Program Agreement for my project. Dickinson Economic Development Corporation reserves the right to reject any and all applications at its sole discretion.

If property is owned by a corporation, partnership, or joint venture, an individual legally authorized to represent the entity must sign below on behalf of the entity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed or Printed Name of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed or Printed Name of Property Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Owner Title

**Attachments:**

- Property Owners: Proof Ownership
- Tenants: Property Owner’s letter of authorization
- Project Outline and/or Illustration (include sample materials)
- Minimum of 3 bids for the proposed Project
- Two 4x6 Photos of Existing Structure and Areas for Improvements

Return complete application with all attachments to:

Dickinson Economic Development Corporation  
Attn: Visual Improvement Program  
218 FM 517 West  
Dickinson, TX 77539

**EVALUATION OF REQUEST  
(FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)**

1. Date of site visit: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Pre-Program photographs taken  Yes  No
3. Post-Program photographs taken  Yes  No
4. Orientation of property:  N  S  E  W
5. Condition of structure:  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor
6. Number of stories: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Exterior building materials: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Pre-Application Meeting  Yes  No
9. Any outstanding liens or property taxes owed to City of Dickinson?  Yes  No
10. Other information: \_\_\_\_\_  
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