

# City of Hickory Appearance Grant Application Packet

The Community Appearance Grant program is financed by the Hickory City Council and administered by the Community Appearance Commission (CAC). Each grant application will be evaluated by city staff and the CAC for eligibility and merit according to the procedures set forth in the program guidelines. The purpose of the Community Appearance Grant is to:

- Improve the appearance of building facades in the Urban Revitalization Area;
- Encourage improved design and building character in the Urban Revitalization Area;
- Encourage investment in the Urban Revitalization Area;
- Promote the beautification of Hickory and the importance of the City's history;
- Improve the appearance of privately-owned, non-residential properties through landscaping;
- Encourage property owners to plant trees along major roadway corridors, but outside street ROW;
- Promote the beautification of the City through tree planting along major roadway corridors; and
- Encourage investment in the environment and aesthetics of the City.

## Eligibility:

- The owner of a non-residential property located within the Urban Revitalization Area, as designated by City Council and shown on the attached map.
- Maximum of one grant per property will be awarded within any one fiscal year. Furthermore, recipients of grants are not eligible to receive additional grant funding in the two fiscal years following approval unless specifically waived by majority vote of the commission.

## Guidelines:

- Grants are given up to a 50-50 matching basis for a maximum amount of \$7,500.00 per application for property improvements. Grants awards are distributed after work on the project is completed, reviewed, and paid project bills are submitted. No after-the-fact applications are eligible.
- All projects must be completed within 120 days from the contract signing. The CAC and the City Council must approve any extension. Paid receipts must be submitted to the City within 30 days of completion.
- Projects of extraordinary impact on the community and of exceptional architectural merit may be considered for funding in excess of the \$7,500.00 ceiling with the majority recommendation of the CAC and approval of the City Council.
- Applications involving property(s) with direct visibility along major or minor thoroughfares will be given priority over other applications.
- Applications where the private investment represents more than 51% of the total investment (public and private funds) will be given priority over other applications.
- Applications must propose improvements that change the appearance of properties in a manner which dramatically improves the appearance of the property.

- Applications supplementing or aligning with public initiatives will be given special consideration.
- Applications for building improvements that contain features that have identifiable longevity (masonry and similar items) will be given priority over other applications.
- Applications for projects involving businesses that have an identified long-term presence in the community will be given priority over applications which involve speculative ventures.
- Rehabilitation of existing structures should respect the architectural integrity of the structure and its historic significance. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation should be used as guidelines in making this determination for historic properties.
- Any improvements that have been made through this grant program may not be removed from the property for a minimum of two years.
- Any proposal for an exterior renovation, including façade rehabilitation and the replacement of an inappropriate sign is eligible for funding. Top priority will be given to projects which make a highly visible contribution to the Urban Revitalization Area. See **Examples of Eligible Activities** below for a list of eligible projects.
- All improvements made pursuant to this grant program must be replaced, at no cost to the City, if damaged or if plantings die.
- All proposals will be evaluated in terms of compliance with existing ordinances and plans, including (where applicable):
  - Land Development Code;
  - NC State Fire Code;
  - Americans with Disabilities Act;
  - North Carolina State Building Code; and
  - Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation.

### **Grant Application Process:**

- Potential applicants must meet with the grant administrator for a pre-application conference to determine whether the proposed project meets the program guidelines. Contact the Office of Business Development at 828-323-7422 to arrange an appointment.
- The owner must complete and return the application form and required attachments to the Planning Department. See **Required Attachments** for list.
- A complete application must be received before consideration is given. Once the application is deemed complete by city staff, the CAC has 90 days in which to make a decision. If a decision is not made within that time, the application will be deemed to be denied.
- If approved by the CAC, an agreement/contract will be prepared by the City and must be signed prior to the commencement of work. No after-the-fact applications are eligible.
- Upon project completion, the applicant must notify the Office of Business Development. A staff person will visit the site and certify that the work has been completed per the agreement.
- After the work has been completed and verified, copies of all paid invoices must be submitted to the City. Once the staff has reviewed the invoices, a reimbursement check will be processed and sent to the applicant. If there is a question or discrepancy about the project or

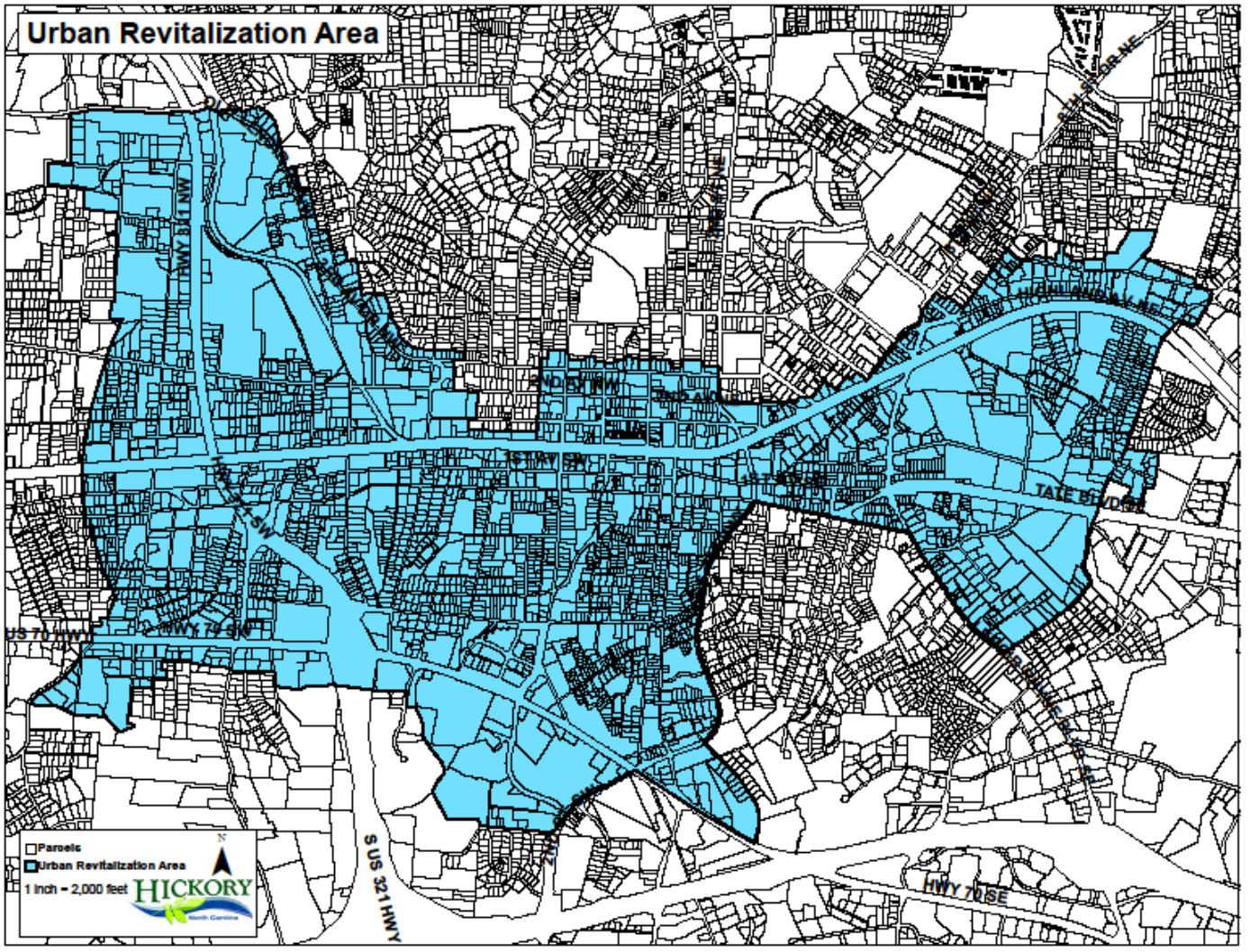
the eligibility for reimbursement, the staff will present the issue to the CAC for their review and decision. The CAC has the right to deny reimbursement based on appearance issues.

### **Examples of Eligible Activities:**

- Exterior facade improvements, appropriate to the architectural style of the building, including:
  - doors
  - windows
  - detail painting
  - rehabilitation of features
  - repointing brick and mortar
- Bicycle access and storage improvements.
- Placement of period lighting or street furniture
- Awnings, but not including lettering or advertising materials (signs).
- Removal of inappropriate additions to existing structures and non-compliant signs may qualify if the overall appearance is enhanced.
- Demolition of existing structure provided that the area is either landscaped to improve the appearance or a building permit has been obtained for new development of the site prior to submitting receipts for payment. Structure to be demolished must be deemed unrepairable and considered to be an eyesore.
- Appropriate and safe cleaning of building that does not damage the exterior surface. Removal of paint is acceptable, however pitting of brick, breaking up of mortar, and sandblasting is not acceptable.
- Painting an existing painted surface; however, colors must be appropriate to the period and architectural style.
- Repair or replacement of extensively deteriorated or missing parts of storefronts where there are surviving prototypes such as transoms, kick plates, and pilasters.
- Other rehabilitation activities may be eligible for a grant if they are determined to be in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation or the Design Review Guidelines of the Hickory Historic Preservation Commission.
- Landscaping features including; trees, shrubs, planting beds, and similar items. Trees and shrubs planted in or around parking lots and/or buildings;
- Street trees (planted outside of street right-of-way);
- Outside benches and patio areas open to the general public;

**Ineligible Activities:**

- Routine repair and maintenance activities.
- Replacement of broken windows.
- Improvements which offer no additional aesthetic value.
- Parking area improvements or upgrades.
- Any improvements which are required under the City's Land Development Code.
- Signs or advertising.



# Appearance Grant Application Form

**Project Location Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Day:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mobile:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Description:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Total Estimated Project Cost \$** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Grant Request Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Required Attachments**

- Property Deed or Lease
- Color photographs of the existing site or project area
- A plan (drawing) of the site showing the exact location of proposed improvements
- A detailed list of the materials to be used
- A detailed project narrative that fully explains how the application meets the grant guidelines; and
- Two cost estimates/bids.** Cost estimates must be from two different companies or individuals who are capable of performing the proposed work as outlined.

**Certification by Owner**

I have completed the enclosed application and attached the items requested above. I have been adequately informed of the requirements of this grant (including eligible and ineligible activities) and the process for review of my application.

I understand that the grant money will only apply for approved work that is completed in accordance with the information I have provided in this grant application. Additional work that may be done on site but that is not described in this application will not be reimbursed.

Owners Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Owners signature must be notarized)

**NORTH CAROLINA  
CATAWBA COUNTY**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Notary Public for said County and State, do hereby certify that \_\_\_\_\_ personally appeared before me this day and acknowledge the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal, this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Notary Public**

**My Commission Expires:** \_\_\_\_\_