



## **RETAIL CENTER REVITALIZATION (RCR) Program Guidelines**

### **I. GENERAL PURPOSE**

The City of Bedford has established the Retail Center Revitalization (RCR) Program, which will provide technical and financial assistance to property owners or business tenants seeking to renovate or restore their exterior signage, lighting or commercial building façades. The RCR program is designed to impact properties in need of revitalization, resulting in the improved exterior, visibility and presentation of a business.

The RCR program is not designed to subsidize corrections to building code violations that prolong the life of a commercial property. Any RCR project should strive toward increases in sales and/or revenue for the occupant or property owner. Through the RCR program, the goal is to increase sales and/or revenue for the occupant or property owner and improve the aesthetic appearance of the City.

Improvements made prior to written approval of a proposed design by the City's Economic Development Committee will not be funded.

The City will consider applications, and approve them in whole or in part under the sole discretion of the Bedford City Council.

### **II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The following criteria must be met for participation in RCR Program:

1. Applicants must be either multi-tenant commercial property owner, or tenant of a multi-tenant commercial property located in Bedford, Texas;
2. Tenants must have written approval from property owners to participate in program;
3. Preference will be given to independent businesses not required by contractual arrangement to maintain standardized décor, architecture, signs or similar features;
4. The retail center must be older than twenty (20) years;
5. Vacancy rate must be at or above 50%;
6. Nonconforming signage on property, if applicable, must be permanently removed as part of the improvement (the City will remove such signage at City's cost);
7. Applicants must meet a minimum budget requirement of \$20,000 for all façade improvements, not including the cost of sign improvements;
8. Property owners must be up-to-date on all municipal taxes prior to participation in the program;
9. Applicants must comply with all State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code and zoning requirements;
10. Understanding that the overall objective of the RCR program is to improve the exterior, visibility and presentation of a property; the City has the discretion to decline an application while suggesting enhancements that would enable future acceptance.



### III. DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Improvements to be funded by the program must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual building, as well as meet City standards with regard to latest construction and design trends. Buildings with significant architectural qualities are strongly encouraged to restore and maintain these features. Improvements for buildings not having such architectural features should still be carefully considered and be seen as an opportunity to substantially enhance the appearance of the buildings and their streetscapes.

#### A. Eligible Façade/Site Improvements

Storefronts should be oriented to the pedestrian and provide visual interest both day and night. Effort should be made to facilitate access into the store and to create a store identity unique to Bedford and/or the respective neighborhood. The following improvements are encouraged:

1. Window display areas which are appropriately scaled and which facilitate night viewing;
2. Window replacement and window framing visible from the street which are appropriately scaled to the building;
3. Lighting that is visually appealing and appropriately illuminates signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of a building façade;
4. Awnings or canopies that can be both functional and visually appealing;
5. Curbing, irrigation, approved trees, landscaping beds (not including planting material) or other landscaping features attached to the building where appropriate, not to exceed twenty percent (20%) of the project budget;
6. Cleaning, repainting or residing of building;
7. Resurfacing and/or restriping of parking lots visible from street, not to exceed fifty percent (50%) of the project budget;
8. New storefront construction, appropriately scaled within an existing building.

#### B. Eligible Sign Improvements

1. Non-conforming signage on property, if applicable, must be permanently removed as part of the improvement (City may remove such signage at City's cost);
2. Monument signage;
3. Signage removal and replacement – assistance with pole sign removal and/or replacement as landscape monument signs or landmark signs. Proposed signage removal and replacement must meet all the current requirements of the City's sign ordinance;
4. Additional signage that is attractively integrated into the architecture of the building, including the window area, awnings or canopies, and entryways;



## IV. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

### A. Financial Assistance

Funding offered is a matching grant in which the RCR Program reimburses the Applicant:

- twenty-five percent (25%) of total project costs, not to exceed \$20,000;
- up to a \$20,000 maximum match for façade improvements;
- up to fifty percent (50%) match to replace, remove, or improve existing signage not to exceed \$5,000.

Architectural design fees may not be included in the total cost of eligible improvements.

The Applicant's match may be in the form of other financial aid (grant or loan) received from other agencies and/or banks, but may not be "in-kind." The RCR Program will only reimburse Applicants after the Applicant has paid his/her architect, contractor and vendor(s) in full and after the project is determined to have been completed in accordance with the contract between the City and Applicant.

### B. Non-Cash Assistance

The City of Bedford will also consider providing non-cash assistance (primarily procedural in nature) for stimulation of development and redevelopment (i.e. fast-track planning, plans review and permitting, as staff work level allows; dedicated inspections).

### C. Technical Assistance

City staff can provide guidance on façade improvements specific to individual storefronts. The Applicant will have a choice of hiring his/her own licensed architect to work on the project from start to completion or requesting that City staff assist first with the conceptual design of the façade. If the latter option is chosen, the Applicant will still be expected to hire his/her own licensed architect, if necessary, to carry forth this conceptual design to completion of construction. The RCR Program will also monitor the progress of the project to ensure compliance with the "Scope of Services" outlined in the contract between the City and Applicant.

**Early meetings with City staff are encouraged in order to help avoid misunderstanding as to the eligibility of proposals.**



## V. PROCEDURES

### A. Application Review Steps

1. All information in the application package detailed above will be reviewed for completeness and accuracy. Additional information may be requested as needed;
2. The application will be distributed to the appropriate City departments for internal review and comments. Staff may review property valuation trends. Additional information may be requested as needed;
3. Copies of the complete application package and staff comments will be provided to the City Council;
4. In light of the proprietary nature of this data, all information included within the application shall remain confidential unless and until formal action is taken to establish an agreement or required to be released by law.

### B. Consideration of Application

1. Applicant meets with Economic Development Director for initial project discussions and files an application;
2. Applicant meets with City staff to discuss building program and design alternatives;
3. If necessary, Applicant's architect prepares final design drawings and submits them to City staff for review.
4. Upon approval of final designs by City's Development Review Committee and approval by the City Council, the Applicant has sixty (60) days to solicit three written bids from the contractors necessary to complete the improvement scope of work. **Bids from each contractor must be itemized so that a cost is associated with each task or material to be installed.** (Copy City staff on all solicitations for bids);
5. Upon approval of submitted bids by City staff, and approval by the City Council, the Applicant will enter into a contract for reimbursement with the City of Bedford. The maximum funding amount indicated on the contract will be based upon the lowest acceptable bid for proposed improvement project;
6. A pre-construction meeting takes place between the Applicant, City staff, selected contractors, and project architect;
7. City staff sends Applicant a "Notice to Proceed with Improvements". **Any work completed prior to receiving the "Notice to Proceed with Improvements" will not be reimbursed.;**
8. Applicant has sixty (60) days from the execution date of the contract to begin implementation of approved improvements. Applicant must provide City staff with copies of all building permits and certifications received from improvement project;
9. Contractor constructs project improvements as specified in the final design. Any changes previously agreed upon and contracted must have prior approval of City staff. It is up to the Applicant to notify the staff of these changes in writing;
10. Applicant notifies the City staff once project is completed;



11. Architect and/or City staff certifies that the improvements comply with the final drawings and specifications;
12. The architect and/or contractors(s) must submit letters to the Program staff acknowledging full payment by the Applicant. The Applicant must submit copies of all paid invoices, along with proof of payment to the Economic Development Department;
13. Program staff submits invoices and proof of payment to upper management for review;
14. Upon approval, the City of Bedford issues rebate check.

## **VI. TERMINATION**

The City of Bedford has the right to terminate any agreement under the RCR Program if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines or if the project has been started prior to an executed agreement with the City of Bedford.

**The City of Bedford reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.**

*For additional information or questions, please contact:*

*City of Bedford*

*Economic Development Department*

*(817) 952-2160 or e-mail [dev.info@bedfordtx.gov](mailto:dev.info@bedfordtx.gov)*

*Please reference "RCR Program" in the subject line.*