

City of Hickory Community Appearance Grant Application Packet 2011

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 Commercial Revitalization Area;
- Encourage improved design and building character in the Commercial Revitalization Area;
- Encourage investment in the Commercial Revitalization Area; and
- Promote the beautification of Hickory and the importance of the City's history.

Eligibility:

- The owner and/or tenant of a non-residential building located within the Commercial 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. The CAC may judge a property eligible for an additional grant within the same year if:
 - the existing business/property undergoes significant expansion which requires improvement to the property, or
 - new business moves in and requires changes to the property.
- Tenants requesting grants must have the property owner's written permission (notarized) on the application form.

Guidelines:

- Grants are given up to a 50-50 matching basis for a maximum amount of \$5,000.00 per application. 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.
- Projects of significant economic scale and of exceptional architectural merit may be eligible for special consideration of enhanced financial participation with the approval of the CAC and the City Council.
- 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. (Available for viewing in the office or may be purchased at www.gpoaccess.gov and is currently \$4.00)
- 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 downtown commercial area. See **Examples of Eligible Activities** below for a list of eligible projects.

- 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.
- All proposals will be evaluated with respect to their innovation, compatibility with the surrounding environment, horticultural value, technical merit, scale, and any other criteria that relates to the project and its impact on the visual and functional improvement of downtown Hickory.

Grant Application Process:

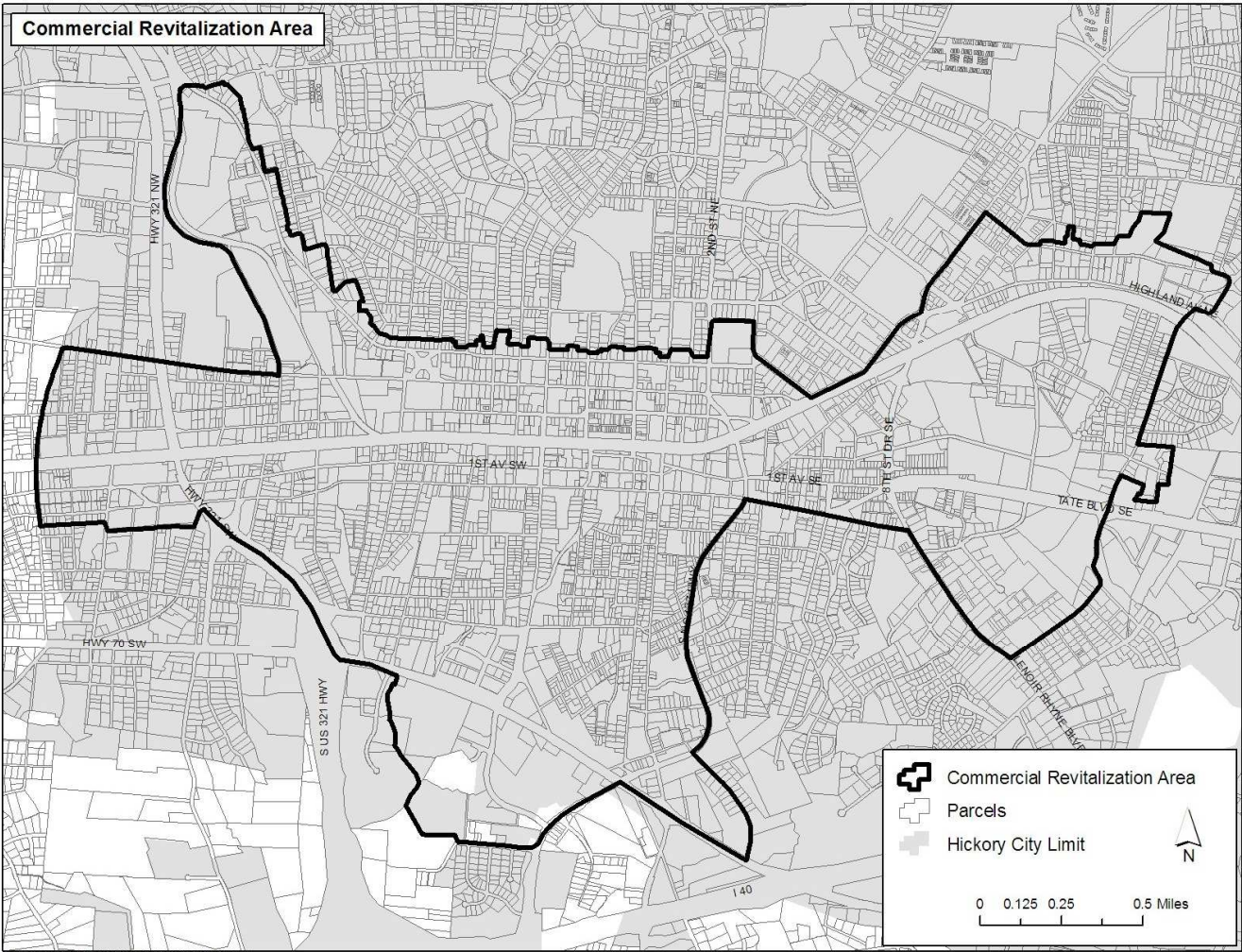
- Potential applicants must meet with the grant administrator for a pre-application conference to determine whether the proposed project meets the program guidelines. Contact Cal Overby, Principal Planner at 828.323.7487.
- The owner and/or tenant must complete and return the application form and required 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 60 days in which to make a decision. If a decision is not made within that time, the application will be deemed to be denied. Denials may be appealed to the Hickory City Council. Appeals must be made in writing to the City Clerk within 10 days of the denial.
- 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 Planning Department. 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. Denials may be appealed to the Hickory City Council. Appeals must be made in writing to the City Clerk within 10 days of the denial.

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
- Landscape improvements.
- Bicycle access and storage improvements.
- Placement of period lighting or street furniture
- Awnings - eligible for a 25% matching grant only.
- 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.

Ineligible Activities:

- Routine repair and maintenance activities.
- Replacement of broken windows.



Community Appearance Grant Application Form

Project Location Address: _____

Applicant's Name: _____

Applicant's Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: Day: _____ Mobile: _____

E-mail address: _____

Property Owner's Name (if not the Applicant): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: Day: _____ Mobile: _____

E-mail address: _____

Project Description: _____

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 brief written description of the project (space provided on attached page or use separate page)
- 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 Applicant and Owner

I have completed the enclosed application and attached the items requested above. I have informed the owner of the project prior to obtaining his/her signature on this application. 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.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

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: _____