Schertz Main Street Local Flavor Economic Development Program

SECTION 1.1 PURPOSE

The City of Schertz finds that promotion and enhancement of commercial activity along Main Street is necessary to promote the economic, cultural, and general welfare of the public. The area around Main Street in Schertz once served as the commercial and social hub of the community. The City seeks to improve the image of the area around Main Street through an inducement of public money to promote local economic development and to stimulate business and commercial activities in the City. The program is intended to:

a) Encourage the attraction of small businesses that will create local charm and help develop a sense of place in and around Main Street;
b) Promote commercial development;
c) Stabilize and improve property values;
d) Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past, and to promote the use of the historic structures for the culture, education, and general welfare of residents, and:
e) Strengthen the economy of the city by protecting and enhancing the attractiveness of the Main Street area to residents and visitors, as well as provide support and stimulus to businesses.

In order to facilitate the promotion and enhancement of commercial activity, the City of Schertz is offering grants that will serve to help new and existing businesses and properties within this area.

SECTION 1.2 ADMINISTRATION

The program will be administered by the City Manager and or his/her designee.

SECTION 1.3 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All of the following eligibility criteria must be met:

a) The business and property must be located along Main Street between Schertz Parkway and Aviation Boulevard.
b) All taxes and government fees must be current on the property.
c) The business and property owner has acquired and maintained all necessary rights, licenses, permits, and authority to carry on its business in the City of Schertz and will continue to use its best efforts to maintain all necessary rights, licenses, permits, and authority.
d) Structures with both a residential and commercial use are eligible for the grant. Structures with just a residential use, including just a multi-family use are not eligible.
e) Grant agreements include a provision that grant amounts provided by the City shall be applied to easement and right-of-way acquisition costs.

SECTION 1.4 TYPES OF GRANT ASSISTANCE

Funding for this program is provided annually through the City of Schertz General Fund in accordance with Chapter 380.001 of the Texas Local Government Code. The amount of money allocated each year shall be at the discretion of the City Council. Funds are made available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Grants will not be provided for work already completed unless it is a repair or replacement and for which the grant is applied for within 14 days of beginning the work or which has begun prior to submittal of the grant application.

ANNUAL GRANT

Funds are provided on a 50/50 matching basis, in-kind contributions may be counted toward the matching requirement. No more than $40,000 in grants may be received per property over a 5-year period except that an additional $7,000 per 5 year period may be provided to the tenant, not the property owner. All improvements must conform to City regulations and building codes and receive approval by the City Council. All grants are paid out upon completion of the project or increments of the project.

a) Signage Improvement Grant – grants are available for both new signs and the renovation of existing signs. Signage Improvement Grant recipients may receive up to $5,000 per property.

b) Façade Improvement Grant – grants are available for façade improvements that help improve the curb appeal of the property. Qualifying façade improvements include: painting, roof, windows, foundation, facade restoration including replacing windows, wall repairs, brick re-pointing, replacing and exposing transom windows; and improvements necessary to stabilize a structure. Facade Improvement Grants recipients may receive up to $20,000 per property.

c) Site Improvement Grant – grants are available for site improvements that help add visual appeal and functional use of the property. Qualifying site improvements include: landscaping, exterior lighting, sidewalks and driveway improvements, parking lot improvements, and outdoor seating areas. Site Improvement Grant recipients may receive up to $20,000 per property.

d) Capital Equipment Grant – grants are available for capital equipment. Qualifying capital equipment are durable items used to produce a good or service and has a life expectancy of more than five years. Capital Equipment Grant recipients may receive up to $2,500 per property.

e) Systems Grant – grants are available for upgrades to wiring, plumbing, HVAC, insulation, etc. Systems Grant recipients may receive up to $15,000 per property.

f) Tree Mitigation Grant – grants are available for major tree pruning up to $5,000 for the removal of hazardous, dead or dying trees, stump grinding and tree replacement/planning.

g) Tenant Improvements – grants are available to the tenant for improvements falling into any of the other categories for the space they are leasing. Recipients may receive up to $7,000 per lease space per 5 years.

NEW CONSTRUCTION GRANT

Funds are provided on a 1/4 matching basis, in-kind contributions cannot be counted toward the matching requirement. No more than $60,000 in grants may be received per property and no additional Schertz Main Street Local Flavor Economic Development Grant maybe received for 5 years from date of approval. All improvements must conform to City regulations and building codes and receive approval by the City Council. All grants are paid out upon completion of the project.

a) New Construction Grant – for the costs associated with actual construction of the structure, not including site work or FF&E.

Section 1.5 Grant Application Procedures

At the start of the fiscal year, the city will promote the amount of funding available. Applications will be received throughout the fiscal year, subject to the availability of funds.

a) Property owner submit a letter along with any required supporting documentation (i.e. drawings, total project cost estimate, photographs, contactor bids, tax certificates, etc.). Applications will be reviewed by the City Manager's Office for completeness. Changes to elevations of a structure require a elevation drawings. If changes of the exterior color are proposed to occur that new color palette must be provided. Changes to exterior not approved as part of the grant application may be grounds for denial of payment.
b) After submittal of a grant request, a preliminary site visit will be made by a representative of the City Manager's Office.
c) City Council will decide which entities qualify for assistance based on the perceived value of their proposed projects to the City of Schertz, the compatibility of the proposed projects with the Main Street Area, and the cost effectiveness of the proposed project in relation to the proposed amount of the grant.
d) The property owner and City will execute a Grant Agreement detailing the obligations of the grantee, the method and timing of reimbursement, and outlining the scope of work eligible for reimbursement.
e) Work must be completed within one year from the date of execution of the Grant Agreement, however; the City Manager may grant an extension of up to one year.