Visual Improvement Program (VIP) Grant Guidelines

I. PURPOSE

In an effort to promote and encourage improvement of Garner's commercial properties, the City of Garner and Garner Chamber of Commerce have established a Visual Improvement Program to provide grants to commercial business enterprises in the corporate limits of Garner wishing to make visual exterior improvements to their buildings. Applications will be reviewed and screened by a Design Review Committee appointed by the Mayor.

II. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

- The Visual Improvement Program consists of two elements: 1) Professional Design Assistance; and 2) Construction Grants.

III. DESIGN ASSISTANCE

- To encourage use of relevant design principles and to assist building owners in getting the best visual impact for the money, the City of Garner has contracted with Bergland & Cram Architects of Mason City for design assistance. Bergland & Cram will meet on-site with the building or business owner to examine the building, and will prepare two to three conceptual design sketches (overlays on front elevation photos) with a list of proposed improvements & estimated costs.
- Applications must be pre-approved by the City Administrator prior to the applicant meeting with Bergland & Cram in order to be eligible for design cost reimbursement. If the applicant leases rather than owns the building, the building owner must countersign the application.
- The negotiated fee for this service is $1,000 to the City of Garner. Applicants are responsible for $250 of this cost, to be paid promptly to the City of Garner upon receipt of the designs (completed designs will be sent to the City of Garner, not the applicant). Any additional work beyond the scope described above must be negotiated and paid separately by the applicant.
- The design assistance process is not required to receive a construction grant, but is strongly encouraged and will be counted as a preferential factor in evaluating grant applications.

- The contact at Bergland & Cram Architects is Doug Foreshoe, 641-423-6349 or dougf@berglandandcram.com.
- The Design Assistance application forms will be available upon request from the City of Garner (923-2588), Chamber of Commerce office (923-3993) or online at www.garneriowa.org.

IV. CONSTRUCTION GRANTS

General Guidelines.

- Construction Grants will be made up to 25% of the total project cost; with a $100 minimum grant and a $2,500 maximum grant. The amount of funds will be determined for each project individually based on demonstrated need.
- Eligible purposes include the purchase of paint, signs and awnings, exterior façade repair, streetscapes, front entry updates, rear entry updates (if entry is used by the public), landscaping, and doors and windows.
- Ineligible purposes include interior designs and improvements, metal awnings, and non-historically correct siding.
- Historically correct visual improvements are encouraged.

Application & Evaluation Procedure.

- Applications shall be submitted to the City of Garner, 135 W. 5th Street, Garner, Iowa 50438. If the applicant leases rather than owns the building, the building owner must countersign the application.
- Applications for the Visual Improvement Program Grant Fund will be accepted by the City of Garner at any time during the year and considered on a first come, first serve basis contingent on the availability of grant funds.
- Applicants can receive funds no more than twice on the same building in a five-year period or no more than two grants per year for owners of multiple buildings.
- The City Administrator will review the application for completeness and return the application to the applicant with deficiencies noted, or forward the proposal to the Design Review Committee.
- The Design Review Committee will have 45 days to meet to review the application. After review, the Design Review Committee will forward recommendations to the Garner City Council for the final decision.
- Action may include funding the application for all or part of the requested amount, denial of the application for funding, or requesting that additional information be supplied prior to making a final decision.

Rating Criteria.

- The Design Review Committee will evaluate applications using Main Street Iowa concepts as appropriate, and reserves the right to establish further set evaluation

criteria as may be necessary. Completion of the Design Assistance process as outlined above will be a preferential factor in evaluating Construction Grant applications.

Grant Approval.

- If a proposal is recommended for funding by the Design Review Committee, a resolution approving the application will be placed on the next City Council agenda for consideration.
- This resolution will establish the terms of grant funds, including terms of distribution.
- Upon award, the City will provide a letter of award for presentation as needed to contractors for the project. Funds will be released upon completion of the project.

V. CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS

- The contents of completed Visual Improvement Program Design Assistance or Construction grant applications are open to public inspection.

Visual Improvement Program (VIP) Design Assistance Application

Name of Applicant: _____

Business Name: _____

Project Address: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

1. Does the Applicant own the project building? ___ Yes ___ No
   If not, please provide building owner's name and address:

   _____

If applicant is not the building owner, the building owner must co-sign the application

2. What areas would you like to address? (Circle):

Painting Signs and Awnings Exterior façade Repair Streetscapes

Entry updates front Rear entry ONLY if used by public Replacements

Landscape Door and Window

Other: _____

3. What is the approximate amount of funding you could obligate toward construction?
(Up to 25% with a $2,500 maximum could be funded through City program)

_____

4. Desired timeframe for construction project: _____

5. Please attach photos of your current building, especially the areas that need work.

I have read the Garner Visual Improvement Program Grant Guidelines, and, believing I qualify, submit this application in good faith on behalf of the above-listed business. I acknowledge that a $250 fee is due to the City of Garner upon receipt of the architect's designs and that I will pay the City promptly.

Signature of Applicant: _____

Signature of Building Owner: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Visual Improvement Program (VIP) Construction Grant Application

Name of Applicant: _____

Business Name: _____

Project Address: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

1. Does the Applicant own the project building? ___ Yes ___ No
   If not, please provide building owner's name and address:

   _____

If applicant is not the building owner, the building owner must co-sign the application.

2. Type of eligible project (circle):

Painting Signs and Awnings Exterior façade Repair Streetscapes

Entry updates front Rear entry ONLY if used by public Landscape

Door and Window

Other: _____ (Committee will determine eligibility)

3. Please briefly describe the project:

_____

_____

_____

4. Have you completed a design assessment (see application guidelines for details)? ____ Yes ___ No If so, please attach conceptual drawings.

5. Estimate of total cost: _____
Please attach a detailed project budget if available.

6. Amount Applied for (up to 25% of project cost; with $100 minimum grant / $2,500 maximum grant.): _____

7. Approximate timeframe for project: _____

8. How will this project improve your business?

_____

_____

9. How will this project benefit the city?

_____

10. Do you need other assistance with this project? If Yes, what type?

_____

11. Please attach a photo of area to be improved.

I have read the Garner Visual Improvement Program Grant Guidelines, and, believing I qualify, submit this application in good faith on behalf of the above-listed business. To the best of my knowledge I hereby certify that all representations, warranties, or statements made or furnished to the City of Garner in connection with this application are true and accurate in all material respect.

Signature of Applicant: _____

Signature of Building Owner: _____

Date Submitted: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Submitted: _____ Amount Approved: _____

Design Comment:_____ Date Funds Dispersed: _____