

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Application:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis at the beginning of each fiscal year starting July 1. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the allocated funds for the fiscal year are exhausted or until March 31, whichever comes first. Funding for approved applications received after March 31 will not be provided until after July 1 provided that the program continues to be funded.

Mission Statement

The Southgate Downtown Authority's mission is to strengthen the economic vitality of the District by creating an environment that promotes commerce, enhances aesthetics, explores mixed- use development and encourages stakeholder participation.

Southgate Downtown Development Authority's BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Program Background

The Southgate Downtown Development Authority (“DDA”) Board of Directors appreciate the contribution our business community makes to the vitality of Southgate. The Business Improvement Grant (“BIG”) Program was established in 2010 to encourage exterior improvements to existing buildings and/or property within the DDA district. The improvements should preserve either the unique historical characteristics of the building or improve its visual appeal or functionality.

Program Eligibility Requirements

- A. Properties located within the legal boundary of Southgate's DDA district engaging in retail, commercial, entertainment, non-profit business, or office services shall be deemed eligible for grant funding (questions concerning eligibility should be referred to the DDA Director).
- B. Property taxes must be up to date for the proposed site. All city accounts in the applicant's name must be current.
- C. Grant funding may be requested for any aspect of the business (building, landscaping, and /or signage) that front on a public right-of-way (street, alley, or public parking lot). Work facing street will receive higher consideration.
- D. Buildings that have improvements proposed under a BIG application must have basic structural integrity and an intact roof such that the applicant is able to obtain a basic building permit for proposed work.
- E. Applicant must carry property insurance for the property listed on the application.

Ineligible Uses of BIG Funds

- A. Existing debt.
- B. Real estate acquisition.
- C. Interior improvement, equipment, or furnishings.
- D. Site plans, building permits, or sign permit fees.
- E. Property appraisal costs, legal fees, or loan origination fees.
- F. Labor costs paid to the owner/applicant or the relatives unless they are licensed contractors and specific approval is granted as part of the application review process.

Grant Awards

Each year, the DDA allocates a set amount of funding for this program. BIG applicants must provide matching funds equal to or greater than their grant request on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Grants will be awarded as follows:

- A. Grants range from \$2,500 to a maximum of \$30,000 per application, covering up to 50% of eligible project costs. Award amounts are determined based on available funding and may not always equal a full 50% match.
- B. For projects over \$100,000 in façade investment, separate considerations can be made by the BIG Program Committee.
- C. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until funds are fully allocated.

Work Completion Schedule/ Extensions & Amendments

Applicant must fill out the attached form and submit. The Extensions & Amendments form ONLY needs to be submitted for an extension or amendments to the initial application.

Extensions – All grant projects awarded funding must have the proposed work completed within 1 year of receiving written confirmation of the grant award. Requests for additional time must be submitted with justification and will be subject to review by the BIG Committee.

Amendments – Applicants must submit proposed design changes to the DDA’s BIG Committee for approval before starting any work. Changes made without approval may disqualify the applicant from the program and forfeit grant funding.

Application Process and Requirements

Applications must be submitted and approved BEFORE work begins.

Applications are accepted starting July 1st through March 31st.

Submit completed applications to:
Southgate DDA Office
14700 Reaume Parkway
Southgate, MI 48195
ATTN: Downtown Development Authority

Grant applicants may be property owners or tenants, provided tenants obtain written permission from the property owner to make the proposed improvements.

The DDA BIG Program Committee reviews all applications and decides whether to approve or deny the grant. Committee decisions are final, but applicants may reapply in the next cycle. The grant evaluation will consider the following:

1. Grant application form (signed and completed).
2. Description of work proposed, including justification and alignment with DDA goals.
3. Detailed cost estimates from at least two qualified contractors.
4. Architectural plans, sketches, and specifications, along with proposed color schemes and materials for exterior improvements
5. Plan for maintenance and watering of landscaping if changes are proposed within the application.
6. List of the Federal, State, and Local permits required for the proposed work. Applicants must obtain all necessary permits and approvals before beginning work.
7. Proof of property insurance.
8. Project timeline or schedule, showing the project will be completed within 1 year.
9. For work proposed by a building tenant, property owner's written permission.

Review Process/ Evaluation of Applications

The DDA's BIG Committee will score applications based on the following criteria:

All applications will be scored based upon the following criteria:

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| 1) Visual improvement or impact of the project. | 30pts |
| 2) Owner/ tenant investment beyond match. | 25pts |
| 3) Life expectancy of the improvement (building improvement vs, landscape improvement) | 15pts |
| 4) Visual prominence of the project and its location. | 15pts |
| 5) Long-term maintenance plan for the proposed improvement(s). | 5pts |
| 6) Completeness of the application presented. | 5pts |
| 7) Utilization of local contractors/materials. | 5pts |

All projects receiving funds must score at least 70 pts or higher.

Rights Reserved

The DDA reserves the right to reject any and/or all applications submitted for consideration under this program. The DDA reserves the right to modify, amend the program guidelines, or to discontinue funding for this program. All decisions of the DDA and BIG Program Committee are final.

Project Inspections

Upon receiving a grant award for funding under this program, the applicant agrees to provide access to their building for the DDA's representative for purposes of inspecting the work being completed by the applicant and/or their contractor. It is not the intent of the DDA to become construction inspectors during the applicant's project and as such, they will not be conferring with or advising the applicant's contractor of deficiencies during the course of the work. If, during any visit to the site, an issue of non-compliance is noted by the DDA's representative, the **applicant** will be immediately advised of the problem in writing. The applicant is required to respond to the DDA within 24 hours to provide an explanation of their review of the problem and what is being done to correct it. Final payment of grant funds will be withheld until all areas of non-compliance are brought into compliance, inspected, and approved by the DDA.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Applicants shall submit one request for full payment of the grant funds, **including all of the applicant's paid invoices and proof of payment for the project**, once all projects improvements have been completed and the DDA has conducted a final inspection verifying their compliance with the original grant requirements.

Once all of the applicant's paid invoices and proof of payments are turned into the DDA Director, reviewed, and the final inspection has been completed by the DDA's representative, the applicant will qualify for payment of the grant funds. The DDA shall provide payment of the grant funds within 30 business days of the date of receipt of the request for payment.

CHECKLIST

Attached to the application are the following documents:

(Incomplete applications will not be approved. Make sure everything listed below is submitted)

- ☐ Description of work proposed, including justification and alignment with DDA goals of preserving or enhancing the DDA district.
- ☐ Detailed cost estimates from **at least two** qualified contractors. (Estimates include name address, and phone number of the contractor)
- ☐ Architectural plans, sketches, and specifications, along with proposed color schemes and materials for exterior improvements
- ☐ Plan for maintenance and watering of landscaping if changes are proposed within the application.
- ☐ List of the Federal, State, and Local permits required for the proposed work.
- ☐ Proof of property insurance.
- ☐ Project timeline or schedule, showing the project will be completed within 1 year.
- ☐ For work proposed by a building tenant, property owner's written permission.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Submittal Date: _____

Applicant's Name: _____

Business' Name: _____

Property Address: _____

Mailing Address (If Different): _____

Applicant's Phone Number (Work): _____ (Cell): _____

Email Address _____

Total Cost of Proposed Improvements: _____

Total Grant Amount Requested: _____

Brief Description of Work Proposed:

Applicant: I have reviewed the requirements of Southgate's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) BIG Program and understand that participation in this grant program involves 50/50 matching funds provided by the DDA. Grant funds are reimbursed after the work is completed and approved by the DDA. I acknowledge that any design changes not approved by the DDA prior to implementation may result in disqualification from the grant. If I am a tenant of the listed property, I certify that I have written approval from the property owner to complete the proposed improvements.

Applicant's Signature: _____

Applicant's Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Please return application and all supporting documentation to:

Southgate DDA BIG Program

Attn: Downtown Development Authority

14700 Reaume Parkway

Southgate, MI 48195

Owner Authorization Form

For

Tenant Proposed Property Improvements

I, _____ hereby authorize _____

To carry out the exterior improvements as detailed in the attached Business Improvement Grant Application Form, on my property located at _____, which is located within the Southgate DDA District.

I also agree to hold harmless the Southgate DDA Board Members, Committee Members, Staff, and the City of Southgate in the event of property damage or physical injury as a result of working on the aforementioned project.

Date: _____

Property Owner

Notary Public Signature (affix seal)

Project Extension and/or Amendment (submit only if needed)

Date: _____

Business Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Requesting:

____ Extension Original Completion Date ____/____/____ Extend Completion Date Until: ____/____/____

____ Amendment Increase in Grant Amount? Y/N New Amount if Increased: _____

Reason for Extension or Amendment:

Note: If additional work is to be done then two (2) quotes/ estimates must be submitted with this form for each additional item being added.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____