
**City of San Marcos
Business Improvement & Growth (BIG)
Program Guidelines and Application**

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of San Marcos has established the Business Improvement & Growth (BIG) Program to provide technical and financial assistance to property owners or business tenants seeking to renovate or restore exterior façades, signage, lighting and life-safety systems for commercial buildings. The BIG program is designed to impact properties in need of revitalization, resulting in improved exterior visibility and presentation of a property, as well as enhanced occupant safety. The BIG program is not designed to subsidize corrections to building code violations that prolong the life of a commercial property. Any BIG project should strive toward increases in sales and/or revenue for the property owner or tenant.

BIG will provide a fifty percent (50%) matching grant of up to \$20,000 to fund well-designed improvements that coordinate aesthetic features of the storefront while creating a safe and accessible entrance for the public. This may include the restoration of architectural details, improved windows and doors, and appropriate signage and lighting. An additional fifty percent (50%) matching grant up to \$5,000 may be available for construction of monument-type signage or the removal and replacement of non-conforming signs. The complete list of eligible property improvements and procedures for participating in the program can be found on the following pages.

II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following criteria must be met for participation in the program:

1. Applicants must be commercial property owners or commercial tenants located in San Marcos within the Downtown SmartCode zoning district or along designated corridors (see BIG Program Eligible Area Map);
2. Preference will be given to independent businesses not required by contractual arrangement to maintain standardized décor, architecture, signs or similar features;
3. Tenants must have written approval from property owners to participate in the program;
4. Any nonconforming signage on property must be permanently removed as part of the improvement;

5. Property owners must be current on all municipal taxes prior to participation in the program;
6. Applicants must comply with all State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code and zoning requirements;
7. Improvements made prior to written approval by the City's BIG Review Committee will not be funded; and
8. Understanding that the overall objective of the BIG 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 funded by the program must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual property, and must meet current City standards with regard to occupant safety. Historical or architecturally significant features shall be restored and maintained. Improvements to properties without such features should be seen as an opportunity to substantially enhance the appearance of the properties and adjacent streetscapes.

A. Eligible Property Improvements

Properties should be oriented to the pedestrian and provide visual interest both day and night. Effort should be made to promote accessibility and to create a property identity unique to San Marcos or the respective neighborhood. The following improvements are encouraged:

1. Restoration of exterior details in historically contributing or significant buildings, and removal of elements that conceal architectural details, including cleaning, repainting or residing of building;
2. New storefront construction, appropriately scaled within an existing building, that are in substantial conformance with the private frontage types provided under the San Marcos Smartcode;
3. Awnings or canopies in character with the building and streetscape;
4. Lighting that is visually appealing and appropriately illuminates signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of a building façade;
5. Window replacement and window framing visible from the street and appropriately scaled to the building;

6. Signage that is attractively integrated into the architecture of the building, including the window area, awnings or canopies, and entryways, and the removal and replacement of non-conforming signs;
7. Installation of monument signage, and the removal and replacement of non-conforming signs;
8. Curbing, irrigation, approved trees, landscaping beds (not including planting material) or other landscape features attached to the building where appropriate, not to exceed twenty percent (20%) of the project budget;
9. Removal of architectural barriers to public accessibility;
10. Installation of fire sprinklers or other life-safety systems in historically or architecturally significant buildings; and
11. Other improvements that meet the objectives of the BIG Program.

B. Prior Improvements

Alterations and improvements made prior to receiving a “Notice to Proceed with Improvements” are not eligible for reimbursement.

C. Alterations

The applicant must agree not to change or alter the property improvements without prior written approval from the BIG Review Committee for three (3) years from the date of the rebate check issued under the BIG Program.

IV. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

A. Financial Assistance

Funding offered is a matching grant in which the BIG Program reimburses the applicant fifty percent (50%) of project construction costs, up to a \$20,000 maximum match, for property improvements and an additional fifty percent (50%) match, up to \$5,000, for sign improvements. **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 BIG 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. Technical Assistance

Initial consultation with City staff is necessary in order to help avoid misunderstanding as to the eligibility of proposals. City staff may provide guidance regarding improvements specific to individual storefronts. The applicant may hire his/her own licensed design professional(s) to work on the project from start to completion, or request that City staff assist first with the conceptual design of the project. If the latter option is chosen, the applicant will be required to hire his/her own licensed design professional(s), if necessary, to carry forth the conceptual design to completion of construction. City staff will monitor the progress of the project to ensure compliance with the "Scope of Services" outlined in the contract between the City and applicant.

C. Alternative Financial Assistance

Depending on the overall size and scope of a project, City staff may entertain additional and/or alternative incentives that would require City Council approval.

D. Application and Information

If you wish to participate in the BIG Program, please contact the City Manager's Office at 512.393.8108 or e-mail kburke@sanmarcostx.gov

V. PROCEDURES

All prospective applicants must follow the procedures in the order outlined below.

1. Applicant meets with City staff for initial project discussions and files an application.
2. Applicant meets with City's BIG Review Committee to discuss property improvements and design alternatives.
3. If necessary, Applicant's architect prepares final design drawings and submits them to City's BIG Review Committee.
4. Upon approval of final design by City's BIG Review Committee, the Applicant has sixty (60) days to solicit three written bids from contractors. **Contractor bids must be itemized so that a cost is associated with each task or material to be installed.**
5. City's BIG Review Committee will review and approve submitted bids. Applicant will enter into a contract for reimbursement with the City of San Marcos. The maximum

funding amount indicated on the contract will be based upon the lowest acceptable bid for property improvements.

6. City's BIG Review Committee sends applicant a "Notice to Proceed with Improvements." **Any work completed prior to receiving the "Notice to Proceed with Improvements" will not be reimbursed.**
7. Applicant, contractor(s), and project architect hold a pre-construction meeting with applicable City staff.
8. Applicant has sixty (60) days from the execution date of the contract to initiate property improvements. Applicant must demonstrate compliance with City permitting process and applicable codes and regulations.
9. Contractor constructs project improvements as specified in the final design approved by the City's BIG Review Committee. Applicant must notify City's BIG Review Committee of any changes in writing.
10. Applicant notifies City's BIG Review Committee once project improvements are complete. Architect and City's BIG Review Committee certify that project improvements comply with approved drawings and specifications.
11. Applicant submits copies of all paid invoices to City's BIG Review Committee. Architect and contractors(s) submit letters acknowledging full payment by the applicant to City's BIG Review Committee.
12. City's BIG Review Committee initiates internal procedure to issue rebate check.

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

VI. TERMINATION

The City of San Marcos reserves the right to terminate any agreement under the BIG 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 San Marcos.

**City of San Marcos
Business Improvement & Growth Program
Application**

DATE: _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Applicant's Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone Number (s): _____
E-Mail: _____ Website: _____
2. Business Organization of Applicant:
☐ Corporation (d/b/a) or ☐ Partnership or ☐ Sole Proprietorship
Business Name: _____
3. Relationship of Applicant to the property to be renovated:
☐ Owner: Attach copy of latest tax bill and proof of payment.
☐ Tenant: a) Attach copy of COSM Certificate of Occupancy, and
b) Attach written permission from building owner to participate in BIG Program,
including expiration date of present lease.

PROPOSED PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Description of property to be rehabilitated:
Street Address: _____
Building Dimensions:
Frontage _____ feet Depth _____ feet Height _____ feet # of Floors _____
Does building contain residential units? ☐ Yes ☐ No (if yes, how many? _____)
2. Describe the scope of work this property improvement project.
(Check all that apply and/or describe improvement ideas.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Signage	<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Painting
<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration of Arch Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Storefront Windows	<input type="checkbox"/> Storefront Door
<input type="checkbox"/> Metal/Wood Storefront	<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Paneling/Sliding	<input type="checkbox"/> Awning/Canopy
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign Removal	<input type="checkbox"/> Add Architectural Details	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

3. *If known*, please indicate the estimated project cost or the total amount budgeted for improvements. Total project cost for façade improvements must be at least \$20,000.

\$_____ **Total Project Cost or Total Budget**

4. *If known*, please provide information on the architect responsible for your drawings, plans, and permits:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No. _____ Fax _____

E-mail: _____ Website: _____

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned hereby represents and certifies to the best of his/her knowledge and belief that the information contained on this statement and any exhibits or attachments hereto are true and complete and accurately describe the proposed project, and the undersigned agrees to promptly inform the City of San Marcos Economic & Development Coordinator of any changes in the proposed project which may occur.

Signature of Property Owner Date _____

Print Name _____

Signature of Commercial Tenant (if Applicant) Date _____

Print Name _____

Social Security #: _____ Tax ID#: _____

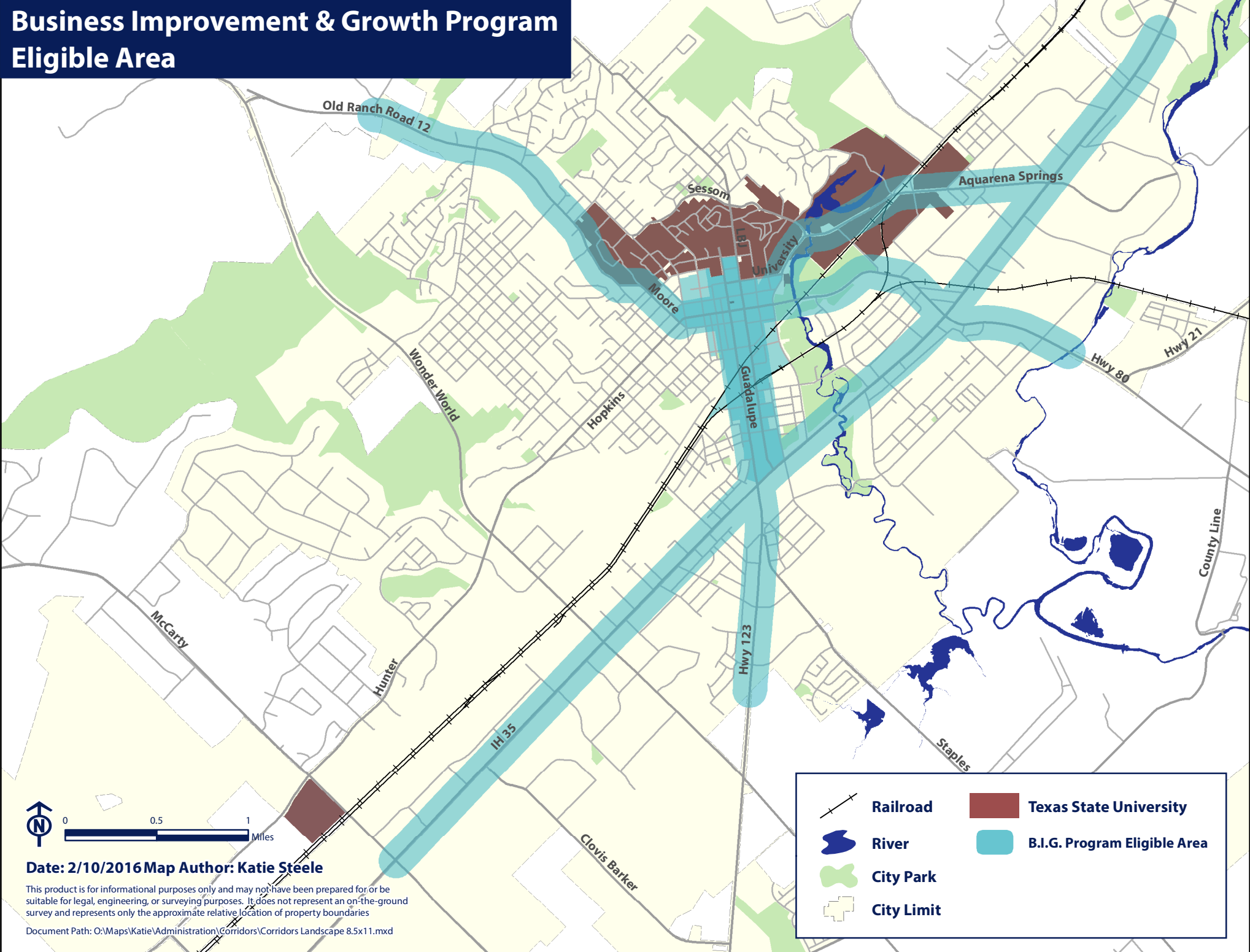
RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION

City of San Marcos
630 E. Hopkins
San Marcos, Texas 78666
Telephone: 512.393.8108
E-mail: kburke@sanmarcostx.gov

**BIG Program
Eligible Area Map**

DRAFT

Business Improvement & Growth Program Eligible Area



Date: 2/10/2016 Map Author: Katie Steele

This product is for informational purposes only and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries

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