

# City of Hickory

## Landscape Incentive Grant Program

### Application Packet

The Landscape Incentive 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 Landscape Incentive Grant Program is to:

- Improve the appearance of privately-owned, non-residential properties through landscaping;
- Encourage property owners to plant trees along major roadway corridors;
- Promote the beautification of the City through tree planting along major roadway corridors; and
- Encourage investment in the environment and aesthetics of the City.

#### **Eligibility:**

- The owner of non-residential property located along a city or state-owned road outside of the public right-of-way.
- A Maximum of one grant per property will be awarded within any one fiscal year. Furthermore, recipients of grants are not eligible to receive additional grant funding in the two fiscal years following approval unless specifically waived by majority vote of the commission.

#### **Examples of Eligible Activities:**

- Trees and shrubs planted in or around parking lots and/or buildings;
- Street trees;
- Outside benches and patio areas open to the general public;
- The cost for any improvements or landscaping that are required under the Land Development Code are not eligible.

#### **Guidelines:**

- Grants are given on a 50-50 matching basis for a maximum of \$2500.00 per application. Grant awards are distributed after work on the project is completed, reviewed, and paid project bills submitted. No after-the-fact applications are eligible.
- All proposals must be in compliance with the City of Hickory Zoning Ordinance. Projects on Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard, NC 127, or Springs Road must meet the approved plans of NC Department of Transportation.
- All projects must be completed within 120 days from the contract signing. The CAC and the City Council must approve any extension. Paid receipts must be submitted to the City within 30 days of completion.
- Applications involving property(s) with direct visibility along major or minor thoroughfares will be given priority over other applications.
- Applications where the private investment represents more than 51% of the total investment (public and private funds) will be given priority over other applications.

- Applications must propose improvements that change the landscape of properties in a manner which dramatically improves the appearance of the property.
- Applications supplementing or aligning with public initiatives will be given special consideration.
- Applications for landscape improvements that contain features that have identifiable longevity (tress, perennial plants, etc.) will be given priority over other applications.
- Applications for projects involving businesses that have an identified long-term presence in the community will be given priority over applications which involve speculative ventures.
- All improvements made pursuant to this grant program must be replaced, at no cost to the City, if damaged or if plantings die.
- The staff or CAC may require that a soil test be completed prior to submitting an application. Soil tests are performed for free by the NC Cooperative Extension Agency/Catawba County Agricultural Center. Call (828) 465-8240 for more information.

### **Landscape Incentive Grant Application Process**

- Potential applicants must meet with the grant administrator or a member of the CAC for a pre-application meeting to discuss the proposed project and determine if it meets the requirements and guidelines established herein. (Contact Cal Overby at 323-7487)
- The owner must complete and return the enclosed application with the required attachments to the Planning Department (See **Required Attachments**). Only fully-completed applications will be considered by the CAC.
- ⊖ The CAC will have 90 days to review a completed application and make a decision. If a decision is not made within that time the application will be deemed to be denied.
- 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.
- The City of Hickory Landscape Ordinance and Tree Preservation Handbook provides listings of suitable trees and shrubs. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use environmentally-friendly landscaping such as stormwater run-off gardens, vegetation native to the Western Piedmont of North Carolina, wildlife-friendly vegetation, and drought-tolerant planting. Further information on native plant material and environmentally-friendly landscaping may be obtained at the Catawba County Agricultural Extension or on their website: ([www.ces.ncsu.edu/catawba/env/water](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/catawba/env/water)).

## **Ineligible Activities**

- Improvements which offer no additional aesthetic value.
- Parking area improvements or upgrades.
- Landscape or similar improvements which are required under the City's Land Development Code.



**Required Attachments**

This information must be clearly presented and include enough detail to enable the staff and the CAC to accurately evaluate the application. Applications will be held without review until all information is received. Additional information may be required if necessary to fully explain the proposed project.

- ❑ 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 plantings and improvements;
- ❑ A detailed list of the types and sizes of plant materials to be used;
- ❑ A detailed project narrative that fully explains how the application meets the grant guidelines; and
- ❑ **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 Owner**

I have completed the enclosed application and attached the items requested above. 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.

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:** \_\_\_\_\_