

## Downtown Bonham “*Save Our Structures*”- Program Guidelines (Revised)

**Background:** Revitalizing a century old downtown is certainly a challenge for any community and Bonham is no exception. With the collapse of the structure on the north side of our town square in May 2013 this situation was brought vividly into focus. It is a situation that - left unchecked - can readily overwhelm the resources of the average property owner, tenant and local government.

The Bonham Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO) working in concert with the City of Bonham is committed to positive growth and redevelopment of Downtown Bonham. It has invested and continues to invest heavily in public infrastructure and streetscape as an essential first step in this redevelopment effort. Likewise BEDCO – with the concurrence of the Bonham City Council - has previously designated the downtown Bonham Heritage District as an on-going “Type B project” to allow for the expenditure of Type B sales tax funds in support of this effort. In the FY 2016 BEDCO budget an additional \$1,000 of funding has been added as the board has expressed its intention to increase utilization of this program and expand eligible activities to include matching funds for actual structural repairs, signage and façade improvements.

**Purpose & Intent:** Upon the approval of the BEDCO Board of Directors and the Bonham City Council the Heritage District *Save Our Structure* pilot program is superseded by the Downtown Bonham “*Save Our Structures*”- Program program to assist small businesses with their analysis of “*what it will take*” to move/establish/expand or otherwise locate their business within Downtown Bonham. BEDCO has budgeted \$7,500 for this initiative. Learning from experiences gained from the former “pilot program” the funds are intended to: 1) assist small (non-national chain) businesses with engaging *certified design professionals* to assess what essential work is needed for an eligible structure to be brought up to code to permit commercial (or downtown residential) occupancy, -OR- 2) to provide some matching funds for; structural repairs, appropriate business signage or façade improvements. **This is an incentive assistance program and not an entitlement.** All applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for their potential impact on downtown revitalization. Existing businesses and structures are eligible to apply for assistance within the Guidelines of this program as is new commercial construction within Downtown Bonham. “*New construction*” is strongly encouraged to ensure design compatibility with the period look and feel predominating architecturally within our downtown.

### **Boundaries of “Downtown Bonham:”**

For purposes of this program the boundaries of “Downtown Bonham” are illustrated on Exhibit A

Properties that are either inside or adjoining the highlighted boundaries or are added in the future and listed by Fannin CAD parcel ID number are eligible within these Guidelines

*[See graphic of Downtown Bonham - “Save Our Structure” Suggested Boundaries]*

**Guideline: Downtown Bonham - “Save Our Structures” (DB - SOS) Guidelines:**

1. **ALL incentive requests are granted at the discretion of the Bonham Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO) Board of Directors and subject to the ratification of the Bonham City Council.** In order to ensure timely responsiveness to requests for funding the board and city council **hereby pre-approve and authorize the Bonham City Manager, and the Executive Director - Economic Development acting on behalf of BEDCO, to act jointly on their behalf** with regard to the award of the “DB-SOS” incentive funding. In the absence of the City Manager or Executive Director, the Mayor – *on behalf of the City* or BEDCO Board President *on behalf of BEDCO* may authorize funding.
2. This remains a modest initiative and is subject to availability of funds. It can be renewed, modified or cancelled by the action of the BEDCO Board of Directors with the concurrence of the Bonham City Council at any time.
3. Neither BEDCO nor the City of Bonham assumes any liability for the professional/technical advice, recommendations, design, construction, installation or repairs provided by the consultants or contractors.
4. Funds are available first come first serve. The amount of a DB-SOS incentive grant will not exceed 50% of the cost of services. **This incentive assistance grant program is therefore “at best” a 50-50 match along with the prospective tenant or owner putting up the other (at least) 50%. Incentive requests** where the public:private investment ratio is **more heavily weighted with private sector funds** (e.g. 40:60 or 25:75) **will be given priority.**
5. Where the application is for the purpose of “technical assistance” by a certified design professional, no structure may receive more than \$800 per *potential tenant\** to be located within the building. \*In the case of an “Antique Mall” or Flea Market (or similar activities) those activities shall be counted as a single tenant and NOT by individual “booth” space as separate tenants.
6. For those applications seeking to make structural repairs, add appropriate business signage or undertake façade improvements **the maximum DB-SOS matching grant award is up to \$7,500. ALL work must have the appropriate City permits** as may be required by the City Code of Ordinances.
7. Applications (*see attached*) will be review jointly by the Executive Director - Economic Development for BEDCO and the Bonham City Manager. If jointly approved, funding to engage a certified design professional for professional or technical assessment of a structure will be available promptly. If the reviewers do not jointly approve the application, then the request will be referred to the BEDCO Board for a determination.

8. Payment will be made either to the Texas certified design professional's firm based on an invoice – OR- as a direct reimbursement to an applicant AFTER the cited work is completed. **Work done before the application has been approved is not eligible for reimbursement** or direct funding.
9. *Structural building repairs, appropriate business signage or façade improvements must be properly permitted by the city. Work done without the appropriate permit(s) forfeits its' eligibility to receive any grant funds under this program .*
10. While the work product or report will belong to the applicant/business prospect, a copy of the written report will be provided to BEDCO for potential future reference.
11. All certified design professionals must be licensed or registered in the State of Texas in accordance with state statute.
12. Certified design professional **services eligible for DB-SOS- funding include** (but are not necessarily limited to): Architectural, Structural or Electrical or HVAC Engineering (*or fields closely related*), Fire & Safety, Fire Suppression, ADA Compliance, Historic Preservation or Restoration, Interior and Exterior Design (*so long as it relates to bringing the building up to code to permit occupancy*).