

Additional Background Information – Part-time Graphic Designer

February 2026

WHY POSITION IS NEEDED

The City of Dripping Springs continues to experience significant growth, resulting in increased demand for professional design work across multiple departments. Expanded Parks programming and amenities have grown the Activities Guide from one to three editions annually, with the addition of Visitor Guides through the Tourism/Visitors Bureau. Major initiatives such as Western Wonderland, Stars in Dripping, Hometown Holidays in Dripping, and ongoing DSRP events require consistent, high-quality visual materials.

In addition, the renovation of the historic Stephenson Building into a community and event center introduces a new, ongoing need for professional marketing and promotional materials directly tied to revenue generation. As the City prepares to launch and operate this facility as a rentable venue, success will depend on the ability to clearly and professionally market the space, communicate rental opportunities, and support bookings through high-quality visual materials. This includes branding, promotional campaigns, rental packets, digital advertising assets, wayfinding and on-site signage, and event support materials. Consistent, professional design will be essential to driving awareness, increasing utilization, and maximizing rental revenue.

Currently, smaller design items are handled by the Content Marketing Specialist and the DSVB Marketing Coordinator. However, large-scale, complex design and branding projects have increasingly been handled by the People & Communications Director (often requiring weekend and after-hours work to meet deadlines) or have been outsourced to freelance designers. This approach is not sustainable long term and diverts leadership time away from strategic priorities. Also, by hiring this designer, it frees up our staff to do more video and presentations for internal training, recruitment and more.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The City has a rare opportunity to hire a highly experienced graphic designer who has already been working with the City on a freelance basis. She is Cathy Richardson and is fully familiar with City branding, workflows, and expectations and can step into the role immediately with no onboarding ramp-up.

The proposed hourly rate is significantly below market. A graphic designer of her talent commonly charges \$75 – \$150+/hour. The candidate is a resident of Dripping Springs and has expressed strong interest in working for the City due to her desire to do something in public service and desire to contribute meaningfully to the community where she lives. She has worked for large companies (such as American Express, Dell Publishing, Bed Bath & Beyond, CBS, Cirque Du Soleil, Department 56/Lenox Group, Disney Consumer Products, Disney Stores, The Jane Goodall Institute, Gibson Greetings, Jim Henson Productions and more), but she misses the day-to-day collaboration, engagement, teamwork and community impact that comes from working directly within an organization, and wants to for an organization she respects and admires, which is the City of Dripping Springs.

SCOPE OF WORK

The position would support:

- Tourism-Economic Development
 - Signage
 - Branding & Identity
 - Campaign-specific visual identities (seasonal or themed).

- Visitor guides, brochures, and maps
- Posters, flyers, and rack cards
- Social media graphics and templates
- Website visuals (hero images, banners, icons)
- Email newsletter layouts and graphics
- Print ads for magazines
- Digital ads for social platforms and display networks
- Event signage, programs, and tickets
- Branded merchandise designs (t-shirts, tote bags)
- Infographics for itineraries or local highlights
- Projects to help businesses in Dripping and encouraging residents to “shop and dine” in Dripping.
- City: Parks, DSRP, Department Needs (some could also tie into tourism)
 - Event materials and promotions
 - Banners and maps
 - Three annual Activities Guides
 - Website and digital graphics
 - Internal HR and employee engagement materials
 - Training and informational videos
 - Logos and brand development (DSRP? Stephenson Building?)
 - Additional design needs as they arise
- Other future needs/potential
 - Founders Day: Helping with maps, graphics (Note: Cathy designed the Founders Day Logo 8 years ago)
 - Stephenson Building: event/rental packets, floor plans, website, etc.
 - Rathgeber: All marketing and brochure needs for educational programming, signage, etc.
 - Historic brochures, maps, guides
 - Lighting Compliance communications
 - Welcome packet for new residents for builders: utility information, City contacts
 - Economic Development Marketing – encouraging people to stay in Dripping and spend money – downtown, future Headwaters developments, breweries/wineries
 - Additional design needs as they arise

FINANCIAL IMPACT

While it may appear cost-effective to manage design work internally or outsource on an ad-hoc basis, having a dedicated part-time graphic designer provides greater consistency, faster turnaround times, and higher overall quality. Specialized design expertise allows projects to be completed more efficiently, reducing bottlenecks and freeing other staff to focus on their primary responsibilities.

In the last year, the City has spent approximately \$20,000.00 on graphic design work. This not only includes work in the General Fund, but also the Ranch Park and Visitors Bureau Funds. As we continue to grow and promote our projects, improvements, events, etc., these costs are anticipated to increase. While there is a cost to bring on a new employee, approximately \$45,000.00 for this position, the impact is nearly cut in half, with anticipated savings in other line items.

This is a part-time position, with few benefits. Additionally, because the role would support both City and Tourism projects, the cost can be appropriately split between City funds and HOT funds. This structure maximizes value while maintaining budget responsibility.

In short, the impact is small:

- Part-time position
- Current funding capacity exists in the Visitors Bureaus and General Fund accounts to fund this position, without requiring a budget amendment.
- Only benefits will be TMRS, since the hours will be 25 per week.
- Depending on the year and projects, we've spent on average around \$10-\$15K on outside design (Hometown Holidays, Western Wonderland, Songwriters Festival, historic brochures, eclipse Items, icons and graphic needs for miscellaneous projects; Rodeo logo; DSVB logo; maps; guides; and more. By hiring this designer, those costs are shifted.
- Competitive hourly rate is well below market value for this caliber of design.
- Costs can be split between City and HOT funds.
- Improved efficiency reduces overtime and frees up time for other needs of People, Communications and Tourism employees.

Q&A

Why is this position needed now?

The volume and complexity of design work have increased due to City growth, expanded Parks programming and amenities, additional publications, and community events. Future projects will need resources such as Stephenson Building, Old Fitzhugh Road, and more. Current staffing is not structured to sustainably meet these demands without diverting leadership time or incurring overtime. And, we have the opportunity to hire a highly experienced and accomplished graphic designer at this time.

Why not continue outsourcing design work as needed?

Ad-hoc outsourcing often results in higher hourly rates, inconsistent turnaround times, and less familiarity with City branding standards. A dedicated part-time designer provides consistency, efficiency, and cost control.

Why hire this individual instead of conducting full recruitment?

This individual has a proven track record with the City, is already familiar with City systems and branding, and is available at a significantly reduced hourly rate.

Is the hourly rate we will pay reasonable for this type of work?

Yes. In fact, it is well below market. Designers with comparable experience typically charge \$75-\$150 per hour. This rate represents a strong value for the City.

Will this position require benefits or increase long-term costs?

It will not incur insurance costs, but given it is 25 hours/week, it will incur TMRS benefits, as a part-time employee must be at 19-hours to not incur any benefits. For this position to work, the position will be between 20-25 hours a week.

How many hours per week will this employee work?

Hours will be managed based on project needs and budget availability, allowing flexibility and cost control, but as stated above, anticipating 20-25 hours a week.

Can this work be done by existing staff?

Existing staff already handles smaller design tasks. Larger, more complex projects require specialized design expertise, are often outsourced or done by People & Communications Director, taking her time away from other needed strategic duties or incurring additional hours/comptime.

How does this benefit the community?

Professional, consistent design improves the clarity, accessibility, and effectiveness of City communications, supporting public engagement, tourism promotion, and community pride.

Why are HOT funds involved?

The position supports both City and Tourism initiatives, including Visitor Guides, event promotion, and tourism-related materials. Allocating a portion of the cost to HOT funds is appropriate and consistent with allowable uses.

What happens if the workload decreases?

As a part-time position, hours can be adjusted to align with workload and budget needs, providing flexibility without long-term obligation.