
Purpose of the Program

This program provides grants to property and business owners to renovate, restore, or redesign commercial building facades and storefronts in the City of Quesnel. The goal of this program is to make commercial areas more inviting and visually appealing to visitors and residents, increase property values, promote private sector investment, build civic pride, and to stimulate the local economy. The funding for this program is provided through a grant from Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Grant Amounts

This program can provide reimbursement grants of up to:

- ✓ 50% of the cost of eligible improvements, to a maximum of \$5,000 per building/project;
 - Building must be located in one of the following Development Permit areas: Downtown Core, West Quesnel, South Quesnel Highway, North Quesnel Highway, or Residential-Commercial Transition.
 - Storefront projects must have a minimum total project cost of \$2,000 in order to qualify.
- ✓ 50% of the cost of eligible way-finding signage, to a maximum of \$500 for businesses in the Residential-Commercial Transition area that have a storefront (see Eligible Properties Map).

Each building or business is eligible for a one time grant. The maximum funds to be dispersed for all projects in the 2020 calendar year are \$20,000. Projects are reviewed on a first-come first-served basis.

Eligible Applicants

- ✓ You must be either the property owner or business owner (if the applicant is the business owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that all improvements are to be paid for by the applicant);
- ✓ Properties within a Development Permit area (as listed above), which have a storefront;
- ✓ All property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current;
- ✓ There must be a current, valid business licence for the property (unless otherwise exempt);
- ✓ There must be no stop work orders, outstanding building permits, or outstanding development permit conditions; and
- ✓ You must not have received a previous grant under this program for the subject property for a different project.

Ineligible Applicants

- ✗ Residential homes located in a commercial area;
- ✗ Government owned buildings (even if they have business tenants); and
- ✗ Properties outside the specified area (as defined in the Eligible Properties Map).
- ✗ Apartment buildings
- ✗ Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (exception if the business is renovating or doing improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening)



Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Awnings;
- ✓ Entrances and doorways (if part of larger enhancements);
- ✓ Exterior architectural features;
- ✓ Exterior lighting (fixtures, but not bulb replacements);
- ✓ Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, mouldings, trims, etc.);
- ✓ Façade painting;
- ✓ New siding;
- ✓ Permanent fixtures (i.e. mounted planters, benches, patios);
- ✓ Signage (affixed to the building);
- ✓ Signage in the Residential-Commercial Transition area (e.g. a sign located at the bottom of the driveway). Signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any signage bylaw regulations);
- ✓ Windows (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone window replacements); and
- ✓ Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors, etc.) to the outside of the building only AND are part of a larger facade improvement project.

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- ✗ Any improvements not visible from the public right-of-way;
- ✗ Any improvements that have been started prior to application approval;
- ✗ Fencing;
- ✗ Interior improvements;
- ✗ Landscaping;
- ✗ Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters, etc.);
- ✗ Paving;
- ✗ Roofs;
- ✗ Routine maintenance; and
- ✗ Structural repairs.

Eligible Costs/Expenses

- ✓ Contractor fees;
- ✓ Design, architectural, or engineering fees (related to façade only);
- ✓ Direct project labour costs;
- ✓ Shipping and/or freight.
- ✓ Project related materials and supplies;
- ✓ Rental of tools and equipment; and
- ✓ PST

Ineligible Costs/Expenses

- ✗ Duties;
- ✗ Equipment purchased;
- ✗ Façade improvement expenses prior to application approval;
- ✗ GST;
- ✗ Permit fees;
- ✗ Staff wages and/or benefits; and
- ✗ Utilities (hydro, gas, etc.).

Application Acceptance and Fund Allotment

Applications for the 2020 year will be accepted from the start of the program announcement, until **August 31st, 2020** at 4:30pm.

All complete applications submitted will be scored and ranked based on the evaluation process listed below.

Project Completion

Actual funds will be allocated to fully approved and completed projects that have all required documentation (verification of expenditures, testimonials, and before and after photos) submitted to the City no later than **November 30th, 2020**.

Permits

Required Building Permits, Development Permits, and Sign Permits must be obtained prior to the start of project renovations; however, do not have to be applied for at the same time as the façade improvement grant. Staff will inform you which, if any, permits are required for your project.

- ✓ Early submission of these permit applications if recommended in order to avoid delays with project completion;
- ✓ The City of Quesnel and Development Services staff are not responsible for project delays caused by obtaining permits;
- ✓ Approval of a façade improvement grant does not guarantee permit approvals; and
- ✓ Work started prior to permit approval will disqualify the project from receiving grant funding.

Design Guidelines

Projects will be assessed based on their conformance (or the amount they bring the business into conformance) with the Official Community Plan Development Permit Area guidelines for the application Development Permit Area. Properties in the Downtown Core also utilize the Downtown Design Guidelines.

Evaluation Process

Note: only projects which meet all of the eligibility requirements will be considered for the grant.

Projects will be reviewed, scored and considered for approval until the August 31, 2020 deadline. Projects will be reviewed and scored based on the following categories:

1. Does the project bring the property into greater conformity with the Development Permit area guidelines?
2. Will the project have noticeable impacts on the streetscape for pedestrians and vehicular traffic?
3. Was a professional designer or architect used in designing improvements?



Business Application Process

Applications and other required documents should be submitted to:

The City of Quesnel
ATTN: Lyndon Hunter,
410 Kinchant Street,
Quesnel, BC, V2J 7J5

Submitting an application does not necessarily mean your project or a specific grant amount will be approved. All project proposals are subject to a comprehensive review, must meet high quality standards, and must reflect the spirit and intent of the Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.

1. Owner/Tenant contacts Lyndon Hunter, City of Quesnel's Planning Technician, to determine if the building qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program, discuss your project, and obtain the Program Guide and Application.
2. Owner/Tenant submit a complete application with designs. All required supporting materials and documents (including owner authorization) must be received prior to be considered complete.
3. City staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the applicable Design Guidelines and Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.
4. Applications are reviewed and a decision to accept or reject the application is made.
5. Applicant is advised of the decision by email.
6. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the Municipality.
7. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
8. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
9. City staff will conduct a site visit to certify the completion of the work, as described in the application/approval. The Owner/Tenant will provide before and after photos, as well as a business testimonial to City staff during the site visit.
10. City staff confirms the completion of all required municipal permits.
11. City staff verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
12. Applicant is issued a cheque.