

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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APPLICATION GUIDE

Please Note that as of October 1, 2023 certain incentive programs are no longer receiving a matching grant from the Niagara Region and the total eligible grants noted in the application guides will be affected. Please contact Staff to confirm the total amount of grants you may be eligible for regarding your particular application. All incentives are subject to available funding.



DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN APPLICATION PACKAGE

COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

- ❖ General Program Guide
- ❖ Required Documents
- ❖ Grant Application Guide
- ❖ Application Form

April 2017

This incentive program document is also on the City's Website at www.niagarafalls.ca under Community Improvement Plans.

General Program Guide

All of the financial incentive programs contained in the Downtown CIP are subject to the following general program requirements specified under each program. The general and program specific requirements contained in the Downtown CIP are not necessarily exhaustive and the City reserves the right to include other requirements and conditions as deemed necessary on a property specific basis:

- a) An application for any financial incentive program contained in the CIP must be submitted to the City prior to the commencement of any works to which the financial incentive program will apply and prior to application for building permit;
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application;
- c) An application for any financial incentive program contained in the CIP must include plans, estimates, contracts, reports and other details as required by the City to satisfy the City with respect to costs of the project and conformity of the project with the CIP;
- d) Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by City staff, who will then make a recommendation to City Council or Council's designate. The application is subject to approval by City Council or Council's designate. As a condition of application approval, the applicant must enter into an agreement with the City. This Agreement will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the grant/loan. This Agreement is also subject to approval by City Council or Council's designate.
- e) Where other sources of government and/or non-profit organization funding (Federal, Provincial, Municipal, CMHC, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, etc...) that can be applied against the eligible costs are anticipated or have been secured, these must be declared as part of the Application. Accordingly, the loan/grant may be reduced on a pro-rated basis;
- f) The City reserves the right to audit the cost of any and all works that have been approved under any of the financial incentive programs, at the expense of the applicant;
- g) The City is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including without limitation, costs incurred in anticipation of a grant and/or loan;
- h) If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the City, the City may delay, reduce or cancel the approved grant and/or loan, and require repayment of the approved grant and/or loan. Grant money approved for a project shall not be held in a reserved stated beyond the defined dates of the agreement;
- i) The City may discontinue any of the programs at any time, but applicants with approved grants and/or loans will still receive said grant and/or loan, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements, and applicants with approved loans will still be required to repay their loans in full;

Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Program

General Program Guide

- j) All proposed works approved under the financial incentive programs and associated improvements to buildings and/or land shall conform to all municipal by-laws, policies, procedures, standards and guidelines;
- k) All works completed must comply with the description of the works as provided in the application form and contained in the program agreement, with any amendments as approved by the City;
- l) Existing and proposed land uses must be in conformity with applicable Official Plan(s), Zoning By-law and other planning requirements and approvals at both the local and regional level;
- m) All improvements made to buildings and/or land shall be made pursuant to a Building Permit, and/or other required permits, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals;
- n) The size and placement of existing signage, including rooftop signs and billboards, will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis by the City when determining eligibility to apply for and receive any of the financial incentive programs contained in the Plan. The City may require conformity to the Sign By-law and/or removal of existing signage as a condition of approval of any of the financial programs contained in the Plan;
- o) Approval of an application for any of the financial incentive programs contained in the Plan will be based on compatibility of the proposed use with the Urban Design Guidelines, and any other guidelines applicable to the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area;
- p) When required by the City, outstanding work orders, and/or orders or requests to comply, and/or other charges from the City must be satisfactorily addressed prior to grant and/or loan approval/payment;
- q) Property taxes must be in good standing at the time of program application and throughout the entire length of the grant/loan commitment;
- r) City staff, officials, and/or agents of the City may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the financial incentive programs offered by the City; and
- s) The incentive programs contained in the Downtown CIP can be used individually or together by an applicant, but the total of all grants and loans provided in respect of the particular lands and buildings of an applicant under the programs contained in the CIP and any other CIPs, shall not exceed the cost of rehabilitating said land and buildings.

Required Documents

REQUIRED DOCUMENT	RESIDENTIAL LOAN PROGRAM	REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM	COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
Application applied for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal - Net worth statement	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Corporate - Incorporation documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last two years financial statements	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Financial - Current bank(s) and financial institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Current registered mortgages	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Details of primary construction lending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Details of any secondary sources of government funding, e.g. federal, provincial, municipal, municipal heritage committee, CHMC, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
List of all other current liabilities and amounts	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Appraisal of current value	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Two detailed estimates of project construction costs prepared by bona fide contractors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> (only 1 required for this program)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appraisal upon completion	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sources and uses of funds statement	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Evidence of financial capabilities consistent with sources and uses of funds statements	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Letters of interest from lenders	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Project rental rates and/or sale prices per unit and per square feet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any leases currently in place	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter(s) of intent to Lease	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Projected expenses or actual if available	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Estimated assessed value upon completion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Property/Parcel - Proof of ownership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site plan or survey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural drawings/design plans showing building, proposed building, façade and property improvements and/or interior layout drawings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breakdown of other uses, e.g. commercial, institutional, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Contracts in place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Written authorization from property owner to apply for grant			<input type="checkbox"/>
Picture of existing façade and areas of building (interior and exterior) to be restored/improved			<input type="checkbox"/>

Application Guide

1 Program Description

The intent of the Commercial Building and Facade Improvement Grant Program is to provide a financial incentive in the form of a grant to promote building rehabilitation and facade improvement of commercial and mixed use (commercial/residential) buildings. The program applies to improvements to both the exterior facade of buildings and interior and exterior building maintenance and improvement works.

All alterations/improvements made to buildings and properties shall be made pursuant to a building permit, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals.

2 Who can apply?

Owners of properties (and tenants with written authorization from owners) within the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area may apply. The City retains the right and absolute discretion to reject an application received from a person or corporation which, in the opinion of the City or its professional advisers, does not possess the experience, financial, technical, personnel or other resources that may be required to carry out the obligations that the applicant proposes to assume under the terms of its application and grant agreement.

3 How does the program work?

The program is structured as a matching grant program where the City will provide a grant to an applicant for 50% of the cost of certain types of facade improvement and building rehabilitation and improvement works, up to a maximum grant of \$15,000 per property. This program has two components:

a) Facade Component

A matching grant equivalent to 50% of the cost of eligible storefront and front, rear and side facade improvement/restoration works. The maximum matching grant for eligible storefront and front facade improvement works is \$5,000. The matching facade component grant can be increased by up to \$5,000 at the discretion of Council for:

- (i) larger facade properties that are highly visible along Queen Street or Erie Avenue; and
- (ii) properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

b) Building Component

A matching grant equivalent to 50% of the cost of eligible interior and exterior building rehabilitation and improvement works to a maximum matching grant of \$5,000. The maximum matching grant for eligible building component works can be increased by up to \$5,000 for properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The maximum matching grant per property is \$15,000.

4 What types of properties are eligible for funding?

Commercial and mixed use (commercial/residential) buildings, including buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, are eligible.

5 What kinds of work are eligible for a grant?

a) Facade Component

The following types of facade restoration and improvement works on commercial and mixed use buildings are considered eligible for a matching grant under this program:

- i) repair or replacement of storefront, including repair or replacement of storefront doors and windows;
- ii) repair or repointing of facade masonry and brickwork;
- iii) repair or replacement of façade surfaces back to their original material;
- iv) repair or replacement of cornices, parapets, eaves and other architectural details;
- v) repair or replacement of awnings or canopies;
- vi) facade cleaning/treatments, not including painting;
- vii) addition of new lighting/upgrading of existing fixtures on exterior facade and in entrance and storefront display areas;
- viii) landscaping, including plant materials (to a maximum 15% of the façade grant amount);
- ix) paving (to a maximum of 15% of the façade grant amount);
- x) architectural/design fees required for eligible works (to a maximum of 10% of the façade grant amount); and
- xi) other similar repairs/improvements as may be approved.

b) Building Component

The following types of building maintenance and improvement works on commercial and mixed use buildings are considered eligible for a matching grant under this program:

- i) entrance modifications to provide barrier-free accessibility
- ii) installation/upgrading of fire protection systems;
- iii) repair/replacement of roof;
- iv) structural repairs to walls, ceilings, floors and foundations;
- v) water/flood/weatherproofing;
- vi) repair/replacement of windows and doors;
- vii) extension/upgrading of plumbing and electrical services for the creation of habitable space;
- viii) installation/alteration of required window openings to residential spaces;
- ix) required improvements to heating and ventilation systems; and
- x) other similar repairs/improvements related to health and safety issues, as may be approved.

- c) The following types of facade restoration and improvement works and building maintenance and improvement works on commercial and mixed use buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* are considered eligible for a matching grant under this program:
- i) a Professional Design Study (to a maximum of 10% of the grant amount) that specifies the significant architectural features to be restored, the nature and method of preservation/restoration, and materials to be used;
 - ii) works that conserve or enhance elements specified in the Reasons for Designation accompanying the designating by-law under the *Ontario Heritage Act*;
 - iii) fences and outbuildings if specifically referred to in the Reasons for Designation;
 - iv) original siding and roofing materials including repair and replacement where necessary of wood clapboard or board-and-batten, repair and repointing of masonry buildings, stucco repair, repair or replacement of original roofing materials (slate, wood shingles, tile, etc.);
 - v) removal of modern material (synthetic siding, asphalt shingles, etc.) and replacement with documented original materials;
 - vi) reconstruction or construction of former and significant architectural features for which the appearance can be clearly determined from documentary sources (photographs, drawings, etc.);
 - vii) cleaning of masonry buildings if it is necessary for the building's preservation;
 - viii) all final finishes, such as paint and masonry are eligible for funding subject to approval;
 - ix) interior works specifically referred to in the Reasons for Designation, including, but not limited to: woodwork, plasterwork, wall or ceiling murals, or metal work, and other decorative features; and
 - x) works required to maintain or preserve significant architectural features.

For commercial and mixed use buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the facade restoration and improvement works and building maintenance and improvement works should be supported by documentation in the form of historic photographs or drawings clearly showing the feature(s) to be restored or reconstructed. Eligible works will be guided by the Urban Design Guidelines and any municipally issued Heritage Design Guidelines, as amended from time to time, and appropriate reference material as determined by staff.

6 What are the maximum grant amounts?

The minimum investment in eligible works by the applicant for the building and façade improvement shall be \$10,000.

The maximum grant amount for the Facade Component is \$10,000 and the maximum grant amount for the Building Component is \$10,000, but the maximum grant amount per property is capped at \$15,000.

Grants are offered on a one time basis per property and shall be issued upon completion of all approved works (i.e. façade and building components as approved).

7 What conditions must be met to be eligible for a grant?

In addition to the General Program Requirements, the following program specific requirements must also be met:

- a) Applications must be made in writing (see attached for Application Form);
- b) The property shall be improved such that the improvement does not compromise the reasons for heritage designation or pre-existing or existing heritage features;
- c) The applicant will be required to submit at least two cost estimates from bona fide contractors not affiliated with the Owner/Applicant for the building and facade improvements to be completed;
- d) The applicant may be required to submit professional architectural/design drawings which shall be in conformity with any City issued urban design guidelines, heritage design guidelines, facade design guidelines and sign by-laws;
- e) The applicant may be required to submit other supporting documents as specified by the City (see attached list);
- f) Construction of all proposed improvements is to be completed within one (1) calendar year of the date of the approval of the grant. If the work is not completed within one (1) year, the grant will not be paid.

8 Is there a fee to apply?

No.

9 When will the grant funds be advanced?

The grant will be advanced in full when:

- a Grant agreement has been signed, executed and registered on title;
- construction is complete;
- the building has been inspected by municipal staff and has been deemed to be suitable for occupancy; and,
- the applicant provides proof that all contractors have been paid.

10 How do I apply for a grant?

- Arrange a pre-application meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, project timing, etc...
- If authorized to apply for a grant, complete an application form and ensure that your application includes all of the documents checked off in the required documents list.

11 What happens next?

- Applications and supporting documentation are reviewed by staff.
- Staff may request clarification or additional supporting documentation.
- Staff will perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the property (if necessary).
- A recommendation on the grant application is made by staff and forwarded to City Council
- If your application is approved, the Grant Agreement is then executed and a copy of the agreement(s) is returned to you. Construction of the approved works may now commence, subject to issuance of a building permit(s).
- Contact City staff toward work completion.
- Upon completion of the works, City staff will conduct a final site visit(s) and inspection(s) (as necessary) to ensure compliance with the Grant Agreement and any permits pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- Submit to the City, copies of paid invoices and "after" picture(s) of the completed works.
- Upon review and approval of all submitted documentation, the City will issue a grant cheque to the applicant for the full amount of the approved funding.

For further information on this program, please contact the Planning, Building and Development Services Department at (905) 356-7521 x4238.

Application Form

1 General Information and Instructions

1. Before filling out this application form, please read the attached Program Guide and arrange for a pre-application meeting with staff. The Program Guide describes the purpose, basic terms and conditions of the Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program.
2. If an agent is acting for the property owner, please ensure that the required authorization is completed and signed by the owner as provided in Section F below.
3. If you find insufficient space on this form to respond to questions, please provide additional information on a separate page and attach to your completed application form.
4. Please attach to the application the required supporting documents as indicated in the Required Documents list. An application will not be considered complete until all required documents have been submitted.
5. Please ensure that the application form is complete and that all required signatures have been supplied.
6. Please print (black or blue ink) or type the information requested on the application form.
7. You may deliver your application in person or send it by mail to:

City of Niagara Falls
Planning and Development Division
City of Niagara Falls
4310 Queen Street
P.O. Box 1023
Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6X5

8. For further information on this program, please contact the Planning, Building and Development Services Department at 905-356-7521, ext. 4238.

Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program Application Form

2

Application No. _____
(Office Use Only)

(Please Print)

2 Applicant Information

Name of Applicant _____

Mailing Address of Applicant _____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

E-mail _____

Registered Property Owner (if the Applicant is not the property owner please fill in the following)

Name of Registered Property Owner _____

Mailing Address of Property Owner _____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

E-mail _____

Agent Information (if any)

Name of Agent _____

Mailing Address of Agent _____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

E-mail _____

Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program Application Form

3

Solicitor's Information *(if any)*

Name of Solicitor _____

Mailing Address of Solicitor _____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

E-mail _____

3 Property Information

Municipal address of property for which this application is being submitted

Assessment Roll Number(s) _____

Legal Description of Property (Lot and Plan Numbers)

Existing Property Use

Is property designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are property taxes paid in full on this property? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are there any outstanding work orders on this property? Yes ☐ No ☐

Size of Property (ha/acres) _____

4

Building 3 (m^2/ft^2) _____

- ii) Cost Summary – eligible façade and building improvement works *(please attached 2 detailed costs estimates from bona fide contractors for work to be performed)*

Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program Application Form

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Façade Component

Type of Improvement/Construction	Lowest Cost Estimate (\$)
a) Eligible façade restoration improvement works	
b) Other sources of government funding? <i>(includes Federal, Provincial, Municipal, Municipal Heritage Committee, CMHC...)</i>	
c) Total eligible costs: <i>a) – b)</i>	
d) Amount of grant applied for: <i>(0.5 x cost item c above) to a maximum of \$15,000 (as per the Program Guide)</i>	

Building Component

Type of Improvement/Construction	Lowest Cost Estimate (\$)
a) Eligible interior and exterior building rehabilitation and improvement works	
b) Other sources of government funding? <i>(includes Federal, Provincial, Municipal, Municipal Heritage Committee, CMHC...)</i>	
c) Total eligible costs: <i>a) – b)</i>	
d) Amount of grant applied for: <i>(0.5 x cost item c above) to a maximum of \$15,000 (as per the Program Guide)</i>	

- iii) Construction Schedule
(Construction of all works must be completed within 1 year of grant advancement)

Approximate start date of construction _____

Approximate end date of construction _____

5 Property Indebtedness

- i) Property taxes and BIA Levies

Type	Annual amount levied	Amount in arrears
Property Taxes	\$	\$
BIA Levies	\$	\$

- ii) Other encumbrances (e.g. liens, covenants, judgements)

- iii) Credit check

Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program Application Form

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The City of Niagara Falls reserves the right to conduct credit checks as it deems necessary. Please provide the following information:

Full name of Registered Property Owner

Current home address of Property Owner

6 Authorization

I, _____

am the owner of/applicant for the land that is subject of this application, and I hereby authorize my agent/solicitor _____

to make this application and to act on my behalf in regard to this application.

Dated at the *(City/Town of ...)* _____

this _____ *(day)* of _____ *(month)*, _____ *(year)*.

Name of Owner

Signature of Owner

If an agent is authorized in Section 6 above, all correspondence will be sent to the authorized agent. If no agent is authorized in Section 6 above, all correspondence will be sent to the Applicant

7

Signature of Owner