



REGIONAL DISTRICT
of Fraser-Fort George

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George

Business Façade Improvement Program

2024 Guidelines

Program Purpose and Goals

The Business Façade Improvement Program provides grant funding to business and property owners to improve retail and building frontages. Eligible businesses are able to receive a 50% reimbursement up to a maximum of \$5,000 to complete exterior improvements such as building façades, signage, murals, architectural features, siding, lighting and awnings.

The goal of this program is to provide an incentive to business owners to improve the look and feel of their business frontages. Vibrant commercial properties have the potential to attract new customers, clients, visitors and potential investors.

Funding for the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) Business Façade Improvement Program is provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

The Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program benefit for improving aesthetics of commercial areas.

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George will provide a 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of up to \$5,000 per building/project to improve the facades of commercial buildings.

Each building is eligible for an annual grant to a maximum of \$5,000. Each year a building may access the Business Façade Improvement program for new/incremental façade improvements.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1,000.

Application deadline is May 31, 2024.

The Business Façade Improvement program is offered by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George with funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Eligible Area/Properties

- Appropriately zoned properties (please contact the RDFFG if you have any questions about zoning);
- Must have an operating business on the property; and
- Must be within RDFFG boundaries, but outside the boundaries of a municipality

Eligible Applicants

- Applicant 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)
- Non-profit and enterprising non-profit organizations (tenants)
- Home based businesses which are zoned commercial, have a storefront and are within the specified area
- Home based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only)
- Property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current
- Current, valid business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt)

- No outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding
- Subject building has not received a previous grant under this program for the proposed improvements

Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the commercial area
- Apartment buildings
- Government owned buildings (municipal, provincial or federal; even if they have business tenants)
- Properties outside the specified area (as defined in Eligible Areas)
- 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:

- Exterior lighting (new but not replacement)
- Exterior architectural features
- Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims etc.)
- Windows (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone window replacement)
- New siding
- Façade painting
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement)
- Awnings
- Signage (permanent on applicant property)
- Wayfinding signage (sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway).
 - Signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any signage bylaws and regulations
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only
- Patios - Please connect with the Regional District on eligibility

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving

- Fencing
- Interior/internal improvements
- Improvements not visible from the public right of way
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- Improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- Improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

Eligible Costs/Expenses

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

Ineligible Costs/Expenses

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment
- Operational costs including utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Duties
- Permit fees
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way
- Façade improvement expenses started prior to application approval
- GST

Design Guidelines

To be eligible for this grant the applicant must:

1. Submit prior to application intake deadline (May 31, 2024) the following:
 - Completed application form;
 - Property owner letter of consent (if applicable);
 - Design/ Drawings for the project;
 - Contractor's cost estimate for the project;
 - Proof of property taxes paid in full;
 - Photos of existing condition of building(s); and
 - Completed Terms and Conditions form.

If the applicant is not the property owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that all improvements are to be paid for by the applicant.

Any improvements that have been started prior to an application being approval are not eligible for funding.

2. Submit prior to application reporting deadline (December 31, 2024) the following:

- Completed Project Completion Report
- Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval and has been paid in full;
- Verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits totals on the provided expense tracking sheet;
- proof that the improvements have passes final inspection for permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required);
- Photos of the works completed;
- a business testimonial on the benefit the program has had on the business, if requested by the Regional District or Northern Development Initiative Trust; and
- any other supporting documentation that may be necessary.

Grants for projects meeting eligibility requirements will be awarded on a first come, first eligible basis.

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the review committee to accurately evaluate the project, and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

Projects must be as consistent as possible with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area.

Building, sign and/or other permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Façade Improvement Program and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program.

Business Application Process

Completed applications can be submitted by e-mail to economicdevelopment@rdffg.bc.ca or can be mailed or dropped off to:

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
CO/ Economic Development – Business Façade Improvement Program
155 George Street
Prince George, BC V2L 1P8

Complete project applications are to be submitted to the RDFFG no later than May 31, 2024.

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 the Regional District 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 all required supporting materials and documents. All required supporting materials must be received prior to the application considered complete.
3. Staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet any applicable Design Guidelines and the 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 or mailed letter.
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 Regional District.
7. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
8. Owner/Tenant provides verification of works being completed and submits all required supporting materials and documents.
9. Staff verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
10. Applicant is issued a cheque.

Please note:

Approved projects are to be completed by December 31, 2024.

Evaluation/Selection Process

The Project will be reviewed and evaluated by the General Manager of Development Services. All eligible applications will be evaluated using the following ranked criteria:

- Does the project meet the eligibility criteria of the program?
- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable Official Community Plan and Bylaw requirements? (These can be found on the RDFFG website.)
- Will the project once complete have a noticeable impact on Highway 16 or Highway 97?
- Will the renovation once complete have a noticeable impact within a community?
- Will the project once complete have a noticeable impact on the streetscape?
- Will the renovation offer a noticeable improvement on the streetscape?
- Was a professional designer or architect used?

Funding will be allocated based on project eligibility and availability of program funds. Funding will be committed on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Additional Information

Projects/funding cannot carry over from one calendar year to the next. Approved projects must be completed by December 31, 2024.

For questions and inquiries related to the Business Façade Improvement Program, please contact Kenna Jonkman, General Manager of Development Services either by phone 250-960-4400 or by e-mail economicdevelopment@rdffg.bc.ca

Business Façade Improvement Program Application Checklist:

Documents required by the Regional District:

- Completed application form (page 8);
- Property owner letter of consent (if applicable);
- Design/ Drawings for the project;
- Contractor's cost estimate for the project;
- Proof of property taxes paid in full;
- Photos of existing condition of building(s); and
- Completed terms and conditions form (page 9).

Approved Application Reporting Checklist:

Documents required by the Regional District to report completion of an approved project:

- Project completion report (page 10)
- Certification of completion signed by the applicant or contractor (whomever undertook the works), indicating that all work described in the application/approval and has been paid in full (page 11);
- Verification of expenses paid (including receipt of payment/invoices or other confirmations of payment);
- total expenditure for the project;
- proof that the improvements have passes final inspection for permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required);
- Photos of the works completed; and
- any other supporting documentation that may be necessary.

2024 Business Façade Improvement Program

**Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
Project Application Form**

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Building Address: _____

(If different than above)

Owner Information

If you are applying as the tenant of a building, please provide the following information and attach a letter of consent from the building owner stating that you are permitted to make these changes.

Owner Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Project Description

Describe the proposed project – Please attach any extra sheets, photos, designs, samples, etc.
Describe the work to be done and materials to be used.

Planned Start Date: _____

Planned Completion Date: _____

Total Project Cost (estimated): _____

Funding Amount Requested: _____

Business Façade Improvement Program

**Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
Terms and Conditions**

I, _____ of _____
(Applicant) (Business / Building)

have read the complete application and concur with and give my consent to the work proposed in the application.

I assume all responsibility for obtaining appropriate architectural drawings, building permits and inspections, and hiring of contractors as necessary.

I will allow the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and Northern Development Initiative Trust to use before and after pictures of the project and testimonials for the purpose of promoting this program in the future. I acknowledge that I may be contacted by the Regional District or Northern Development Initiative Trust to supply a testimonial about the value of the supported façade improvement to the business.

I agree not to involve the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George or Northern Development Initiative Trust in any legal action between myself and any contractors, estimators, employees, workers or agents arising from or out of the façade improvement project.

I give my consent to the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George to make all inspections necessary to confirm that the approved plans are implemented in accordance with the expected standards.

Payment of approved grants will be made upon the applicant providing the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George with proof of final completion of proposed improvements along with verification of expenditures and proof of final inspections (where required).

Signature _____

Date _____

2024 Business Façade Improvement Program

**Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
Project Completion Report**

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Building Address: _____

2024 Business Façade Improvement Program

**Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
Certificate of Completion**

Contractor Information

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Property Information

Business Name: _____

Building Address: _____

I verify that I was involved in the works described in the application/approval for the above noted business and that:

- all works have been completed; and
- all works have been paid in full.

Signature _____

Date _____