



Regional District of
Kitimat-Stikine

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Business Façade Improvement Program

2024 Guidelines

Program Purpose and Goals

This program provides grants to eligible commercial properties within the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, and F. The Business Façade Improvement Program is aimed at helping businesses refresh the façade of their building, including facades, siding, murals, signage, architectural features, lighting, awnings, and others. This will enhance the streetscape and visual impact of main streets. The program is designed to attract locals and visitors to main street.

This initiative will contribute towards:

- Making communities in our Electoral Areas a more inviting place to walk, bike, shop, and play;
- Promoting the marketability of retail and commercial businesses to increase overall revenues for these businesses;
- Increasing the attractiveness of businesses along our major highway corridors;
- Helping building owners to create value and attract and retain tenants;
- Enhancing the quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors on main street and;
- Building civic pride among the business community and citizens of Electoral Areas A-F.

Funding for the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine 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 Kitimat-Stikine will provide a 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of \$5,000 per 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 \$200.

Application deadline is June 30, 2024.

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

Eligible Areas

Commercial properties in Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, and F are eligible to apply for this funding. This excludes properties within the municipal boundaries of the City of Terrace, District of Kitimat, District of New Hazelton, Village of Hazelton, and District of Stewart.

Given the rural and remote nature of communities within the Electoral Areas, eligible properties will not be limited to a “downtown core”, as many unincorporated communities within the Electoral Areas do not

have a downtown core, but rather have businesses along highway corridors, designed to capitalize on vehicle traffic. Enhancing these businesses is vital to their survival and the prosperity of our smallest northern communities.

Home-based businesses used for commercial enterprises are not eligible. The purpose of the building structure must be commercial in nature.

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 (affixed to the building)
- 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

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

In order to be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and costing for the project.

Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted, at the discretion of the Economic Development Commission.

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.

As far as possible, projects must be consistent with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area.

As far as possible, projects must be consistent with the general form and character of the landscape of the Regional District, without compromising the ability to attract visitors and customers.

Building Façade Improvement designs must avoid:

- Neon and backlit signs
- Inappropriate or tasteless language or imagery
- References to political or religious content

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 Business Façade Improvement Program and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program.

Business Application Process

Applications must be submitted to the Economic Development Officer by completing our online application form, by email to ecdev@rdks.bc.ca or by mail to Suite 300 – 4545 Lazelle Ave, Terrace BC V8G 4E1. Applications must include a completed design and budget. The Economic Development Officer will preliminarily evaluate the application to ensure that it meets the program guidelines. If it passes the preliminary evaluation, it will be submitted to the Economic Development Commission for decision.

The Regional District's Economic Development Commission will evaluate applications. A Commission vote by majority will determine whether the application is successful.

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 Municipality 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. 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 by the Economic Development Commission and a decision to accept or reject the application is made by majority vote.
5. Applicant is advised of the decision by email and 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 Municipality.
7. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
8. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses and proof of payment (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
9. Owner/Tenant provides a Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval and has been paid in full, as well as before and after photos (matching) and any other supporting documentation.
 - a. Owner/Tenant acknowledges they may be contacted by the Municipality or Northern Development to supply a testimonial about the value of the supported façade improvement to the business.
10. Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passed final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
11. Staff verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
12. Applicant is issued a cheque.

Please note:

Approved projects must be completed by Year End (December 31).

Evaluation/Selection Process

The Regional District's Economic Development Commission will evaluate applications at their monthly Commission meeting. A Commission vote by majority will determine whether the application is successful. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted, at the discretion of the Economic Development Commission.

All Eligible Projects will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Does the project improve the appearance of the commercial building?
- Does the project contribute to the potential for increased revenue?
- Will the renovation offer a noticeable improvement on the streetscape?

Additional Information

For questions and inquiries related to the Business Façade Improvement Program, please contact the RDKS Economic Development Officer, either by phone 250-615-6100 or by e-mail ecdev@rdks.bc.ca.