

# Investing in our Downtown



## Business Façade Improvement Program

The City of Fort St. John Business Façade Improvement Program is funded through the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT). This program will run through the City of Fort St. John with support from the Mayor's Standing Committee on Community Economic Recovery, to assist local businesses with renovating, signage, and improving aesthetics of commercial and building areas.

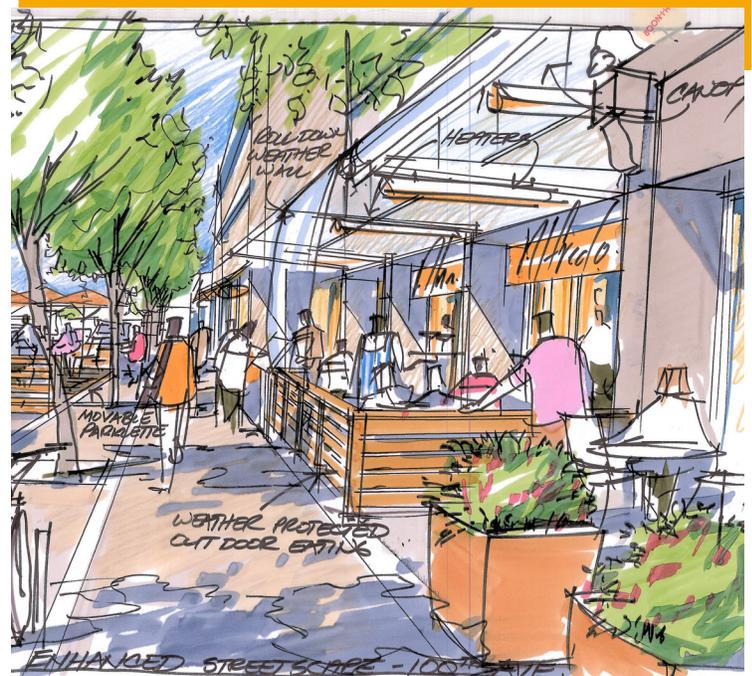
### Things to consider

- NDIT will provide a one time 50% reimbursement grant of up to \$5,000 maximum per commercial building/project.
- Additional funding provided by the Mayor's Standing Committee on Community Economic Recovery may be available to businesses located on a corner.
- Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1000

### The program is intended to:

- Boost the economic viability and vibrancy of the downtown by supporting visual improvements such as façades, signage, murals, architectural features, siding, lighting and awnings
- Advance the Downtown Action Plan and meet the form and character of the Downtown Development Permit Area
- Stimulate private sector investment in local business improvements
- Enhance the quality of life for citizens, workers and visitors to the community
- Increase the attractiveness of the community to enhance community pride and visitor experience
- Improve community appearance to support recruitment of new businesses and residents

Application deadline is April 27, 2023



## ✓ 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)
- The business must be **located in the Downtown Development Permit Area** (see map on page 3)
- Property taxes pertaining to the property must be fully paid and current
- You must have current, valid, business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt)
- There must be no outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit requirement outstanding
- The subject property must not have received a previous grant under this program

## ✓ Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of but are not limited to:

- Exterior lighting (new, 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 and canopies
- Signage
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.)

## ✗ Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the Downtown Development Permit 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 Properties)
- 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)

## ✗ Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving
- Fencing
- Interior/internal improvements
- Any improvements not visible from the public right of way
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- Any improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- Any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

## ✓ Eligible Costs / Expenses

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

## ✗ Ineligible Costs / Expenses

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

## ✓ Downtown Development Permit Area

The Downtown Development Permit Area is located around 100 Street and 100 Avenue. This area has recently seen the completion of a [Downtown Action Plan](#), which strives to revitalize and bring a new sense of purpose and place to downtown Fort St. John. It is envisioned that the area will be redeveloped with a range of single and multi-family housing, small-scale commercial, and community facilities such as public plazas and spaces that encourage a pedestrian-friendly and walkable environment.



## Design Guidelines

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

Designs need to be clearly outlined and show an example of final design to allow the review committee time to accurately evaluate the project.

The Business Façade Improvement application and guidelines can be found on the City of Fort St. John website located on the [Economic Development page](#).

## Application Process

Applying does not 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. Project proposals should align with the design guidelines of the Downtown Development Permit Area (Zoning Bylaw No. 2470, 2019).

1. Owner/Tenant fills out the online [application](#) on the City website for pre-approval.
2. Committee reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the applicable Development Permit Area and Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.
3. Applications are reviewed by the committee to accept or reject the application.
4. Successful applications will receive a Letter of Understanding which must be signed by the owner and/or tenant and a representative of the municipality.
5. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations. All work within C2 will require a Development Permit. The process to acquire permits may take a minimum of 8 weeks.

## Evaluation / Selection Process

The Project Review Committee will consist of two members from the Mayor Standing Committee and two City staff.

All Eligible Projects will be evaluated using the following ranked criteria:

- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable design guidelines?
- Will the project, once complete, have a noticeable impact on the streetscape?
- Was a professional designer or architect used?

## Additional Resources

1. [Downtown Action Plan](#)
2. [Zoning Bylaw](#)
3. [100 Street Corridor Plan](#)
6. Owner/Tenant provides:
  - Verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
  - Proof that your contractor(s) have been paid in full.
  - Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
  - Before and after photos of the project.
  - Any other supporting documentation.
7. Staff verify that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approve reimbursement.
- 8.A applicant is issued a cheque.

**Approved projects are to be completed by Year End - December 31, 2023**

## Contact Information

City of Fort St. John  
Economic Development

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Online application form  
[fortstjohn.ca/facade-grant](https://fortstjohn.ca/facade-grant)