

Investing in our Businesses



Business Façade Improvement Program

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

- The City of Fort St. John will provide a one time 50% reimbursement grant of up to \$5,000 maximum per commercial building and up to \$10,000 maximum per commercial building located on a corner. Additional funding for corner properties is provided by the Mayor's Standing Committee on Community Economic Development.
- 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
- 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 May 15, 2025



✓ 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 approved Development Permit Area (see page 3 for details)
- 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 affixed surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims, and such)
- 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 (affixed to the building)
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors, and such) to the outside of the building only, and are part of a larger façade improvement project

✗ 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)
- New construction. Must be an older building needing new façade

✗ Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters, and such)
- 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

✓ Eligible Properties

In 2024, the City of Fort St. John expanded the grant funding area for the following small and medium size business C2, C3 and C4 located in Downtown Permit Area, General Commercial Development Permit Area and Major Corridor Development Permit Area. Eligible Properties are visible on our [Development Permit Area Map](#).

✓ Downtown Permit Area (noted as orange on the Area Map)

The Downtown Development Permit Area is located around 100th Street and 100th 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 multiplefamily housing, small-scale commercial and community facilities such as public plazas and spaces in an area that encourages a pedestrian-friendly and walkable environment.

✓ General Commercial Development Permit Area (noted as red on the Area Map)

The General Commercial Development Permit Area is primarily located just off the Alaska Highway, although some parcels within this development permit area are found along 100th Avenue, around 100th Street and 105th Avenue and north of 100th Street and 114A Avenue. This development permit area is intended to ensure that commercial development within Fort St. John is undertaken to a high-quality, visually appealing standard that encourages local shopping and provides for a safe, accessible and attractive environment for residents and visitors.

✓ Major Corridor Development Permit Area (noted as purple on the Area Map)

The Major Corridor Development Permit areas are quite visible from the Alaska Highway and its frontage roads and other major corridors into Fort St. John, such as 100th Avenue and 100th Street. These areas often form the first impression of Fort St. John for tourists, as well as a continuing impression for citizens who regularly drive along these routes. This Development Permit Area is important for the tourism and highway commercial business in Fort St. John and encompasses properties that front major corridors in the City.

Unsure if your business is within the qualifying area? We can help:

City of Fort St. John Economic Development

250 787 8150

economicdevelopment@fortstjohn.ca

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 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.
4. Owner/Tenant receives permit information package to review prior to the project starting.
5. Successful applications will receive a Letter of Understanding which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the municipality.
6. Owner/Tenant submits any required permits and completes the renovations once permits have been acquired.

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. [Official Community Plan](#)
4. [Economic Development Strategy](#)
7. Owner/Tenant books before and after photos with Economic Development.
8. 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).
 - ☐ Any other supporting documentation.
9. Staff verify that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approve reimbursement.
10. Applicant is issued a cheque.

**Approved projects are to be completed by
Year End - December 31, 2025**

Contact Information

City of Fort St. John - Economic Development

10648 100 Street
Fort St. John, BC, V1J 3Z6

250 787 8150
economicdevelopment@fortstjohn.ca

Online application form
fortstjohn.ca/facade-grant