



## *Business Façade Improvement Program*



*Improving the city's first impressions*



# Dawson Creek Business Façade Improvement Program

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## **Purpose**

The physical environment in which we live and work has a great effect on us. A community that is more appealing to the eye gives its citizens a greater sense of place and welcomes visitors, and for a city's downtown and higher traffic areas, one of the strongest determinants of the character and quality is its building frontages.

Northern Development Initiative Trust in partnership with Community Futures Peace Liard, Dawson Creek Chamber of Commerce and the City of Dawson Creek are pleased to provide this program to give monetary assistance as an incentive to building/business owners, to improve the character and physical appearance of their buildings. The program guidelines are intended to set a quality standard for the types of improvements, and act as a guide to review applications by the Project Review Committee (PRC).

## **Project Review Committee**

The Project Review Committee members are representatives from the City of Dawson Creek Economic Development Advisory Committee, Community Futures Peace Liard and the Dawson Creek Chamber of Commerce.

## **Program**

The BUSINESS FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (BFIP) will provide a 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of \$2,500 per building/project to improve the facades of downtown buildings. The building must be located within the city boundaries and is eligible for the one time grant. Please see the Intake process on page 9 for various stages of eligibility. Buildings occupying corner lots may be eligible for a maximum reimbursement grant of 50%, up to a maximum of \$5,000 for improvements (given that the improvements occur on both street-facing sides of the building). Corner-lot projects must have a minimum total cost of \$5,000 in order to qualify.

For projects on corner lots, improvements must be reflected on both sides of the building in order to be considered for the maximum grant of \$5,000. Improvements to only one street-facing side will be eligible for a maximum grant of \$2,500 per year to a lifetime maximum of \$5,000.

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## General Guidelines

The Business Façade Improvement Program is primarily focused on the physical appearance of the buildings within the downtown core and their relationship to the street. Façades and storefronts of the retail and commercial buildings are to be considered. The character and design of the building along with the businesses contained within attract shoppers both for goods and services that they provide and for the experience of walking around an interesting and lively urban space.

Limited funds are available and projects must follow the City of Dawson Creeks Downtown Development Permit Guidelines. The PRC will then make recommendations to the city for final grant approval.

Buildings that have received the façade improvement grant shall not be eligible to receive a subsequent grant. This is a one-time grant only.

## Eligible Applicants

- You must be either the property owner or business owner (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);
- All property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current;
- There must be a current, valid business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt);
- There must be no outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding;
- You have not received a previous grant under this program for the subject property;
- Not for profit organizations (building tenants are eligible to apply to the program.);
- Home-based businesses, with a visual presence in the traffic area, may apply for way-finding signage (sign located on the business property i.e. bottom of driveway, directing customers to the business). Signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any signage bylaw applicable to your community.

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## **Ineligible Applicants**

- Residential homes located in the designated commercial area;
- Municipally owned buildings (even if they have business tenants);
- Properties outside the specified area (as defined in the community's Intake Process);
- Non-operating business (the business must be in operation);
- Not for new construction. Must be an older building needing new façade.

## **Design Guidelines**

In order to be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and costing for the project. Designs need not be done by a professional architect or designer but it is strongly encouraged that the tenant/property owner seeks professional help, keeping in mind that that grants will be awarded based on merit of design and visual impact to the streetscape. Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the PRC to evaluate the project so that the PRC can clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended upon during the application process.

## **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 (if part of larger enhancements)
- Awnings
- Signage (affixed to the building)

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## **Ineligible improvements include:**

- Roofs
- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Interior window coverings
- Ramps
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving
- Fencing
- Any improvements not visible from the public right-of-way
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- Any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and objectives.

## **Eligible Costs**

- Direct project labour costs
- Contractor Fees
- Rental of tools and equipment for construction work
- Project related materials and supplies
- Design and architectural fees (related to the façade)

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## Ineligible Costs

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way
- Utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Equipment purchased
- GST/PST
- Duties
- Shipping cost
- Purchase of construction equipment and tools
- Building permits, development permits or other municipal fees
- Façade improvements expenses started prior to application approval

The objective of this program is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our downtown streetscape, even if it is just one building at a time. Should the Project Review Committee deem that the proposed project does not have a positive impact to the streetscape the application may be denied.

**NOTE: Tenants must receive written approval from Owners prior to moving forward with the façade improvements. A letter from the owner must accompany the application.**

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## Application Process

1. Owner/Tenant submits application with designs (and approval letter from owner if applicable) to Community Futures Peace Liard (CFPL)
2. CFPL reviews application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the criteria and presents to Project Review Committee (PRC).
3. The PRC makes a recommendation to the City of Dawson Creek to accept or reject the application.
4. The City administration will vote to accept or reject PRC recommendations
5. Approval or rejection of application is communicated to applicant by email and mailed letter
6. For successful applications, a letter of understanding is sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the Tenant/Owner and the Community Futures Peace Liard.
7. Tenant/Owner completes renovations.
8. Tenant/Owner provides verification of expenditures by providing
  - Copy of Invoice
  - Cleared Check/Bank Statement confirming payment or
  - Visa Statement confirming payment
9. Tenant/Owner provides a certificate of completion signed by the tenant/owner and the general contractor or architect/designer
10. Tenant/Owner provides proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (when required), with clear before and after pictures.  
**\*High quality before and after pictures must be taken at the same angle and the same time of day. Applicant is responsible for printing the photos and including them with other required documentation.**
11. Testimony on the Northern Development Trust Grant.
12. Committee meets to verify that that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and provide confirmation to PRC.

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13. The City of Dawson Creek approves reimbursement
14. Community Futures prepares letter confirming acceptance of project completion is prepared and cheque is issued to the project proponent.

**Note: Submitting an application does not guarantee eligibility**

## **Time Frame**

Applications must be submitted to Community Futures Peace Liard and approved by the City PRIOR to the onset of the façade improvement project in order to be eligible to receive funding.

Applications will be received until September 1 2018 or until funding is allocated. Project must be completed by December 31, 2018

Funds must be spent by December 2018 in order to be eligible. There is no carry-over of reimbursement into the next fiscal year. Once a completed application is received Community Futures Peace Liard will send an email confirming receipt.

Completed application is received and reviewed by Project Review Committee and a recommendation (to accept or decline) is presented to the City of Dawson Creek Administration.

Once accepted, the Tenant/Owner has up until the end of the fiscal year December 31, 2018 to complete the project from the date indicated on the signed letter of understanding.



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## **Intake Process**

### **First Intake: May 1 2018**

Businesses in the downtown core and extending to 17<sup>th</sup> Street.

Alaska Highway Dawson Creek City Boundary from the west to the traffic circle.

8<sup>th</sup> Street from the traffic circle to the Dangerous Good Route turnoff.

### **Second Intake: July 1, 2018**

After July 30<sup>th</sup> if there is still funding left over from the first intake we will open it up to businesses in other areas of town.

In this case the business would have to have a visual presence in a high traffic area.

### **Third Intake: September 1 2018**

If there is a business owner who has more than one location they can apply for a second location, if there is still funding left over.

## **Project Review Committee/Selection Process**

The PRC will consist of 3 to 5 members from the community and shall be chaired by a Director from the Dawson Creek Economic Development Advisory Committee. The PRC's primary responsibility is to review all applications, determine eligibility of projects and make recommendations to the City regarding which projects should be funded.

The PRC will also be responsible for confirming verification of expenditures and that the project has been completed according to the approved plans.

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In the event that there are more eligible applicants than funds available to award, the PRC will prioritize projects based on the following ranked criteria:

1. Location with preference in relation to the first intake
2. Use of a professional designer/architect but not limited to;
3. Age and condition of building i.e. buildings in poor condition have greater likelihood of project approval;
4. Impact on curb appeal.

## **Local Contractors**

Projects that are using local contractors and services will be given priority.

## **Appeal Process**

In the event that an application is declined, the project proponent may request a meeting with the Chair and one additional PRC member to discuss the application with the purpose of:

- a) Seeking input on the proposal in order to modify the application and meet the program guidelines.
- b) Provide additional information to the committee in order to seek reversal of the decision to decline the application.

## **Additional information**

The City of Dawson Creek may require development, building and or sign permits based on the extent of the improvements to be completed.

## **Submit application to:**

Joanna Phinney  
Community Futures Peace Liard  
904 – 102 Avenue, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 2B7

Phone: 250 782 8748  
Email: [jphinney@communityfutures.biz](mailto:jphinney@communityfutures.biz)

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