



## **FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM**

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## Introduction

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The revitalization of our downtown is one of the Downtown Duncan Business Improvement Area's (DDBIA) strategic priorities. Case studies have shown that façade improvement programs can help increase business sales, increase the number of one-time customers, provide property owners with increased rental revenues, encourage neighbouring properties to take on their own improvement projects, and help increase community pride.

## Section A: Program Overview

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### Program Purpose:

The DDBIA, in partnership with the City of Duncan, is providing a façade improvement program to revitalize and attract more customers and businesses to downtown Duncan. This program will provide a grant and assist business and/or property owners in making their visions for storefront improvements a reality.

### Eligible Applicants:

To be eligible to apply:

- Applicant must be the property owner or the business owner. If not the property owner the applicant must provide the property owner's approval in writing
- Applicant must provide proof of a current business licence issued by the City of Duncan
- All City of Duncan property taxes must be paid in full, with proof of payment in writing
- Applicant must be in good standing with the City of Duncan (i.e. no unresolved bylaw complaints)
- Have not applied for and received a grant in the past 24 months
- Both the property and business owners may apply separately for individual grants for different projects for the same subject property once every 24 months

### Eligible Applications Include:

- Detailed description of proposed improvements
- Proof of paid property taxes
- Letter from City of Duncan stating that Development Permit, Sign Permit, and/or Building permits are not required OR

- Development, Sign, and/or Building permits issued by the City of Duncan
- Photos of existing façade
- Drawing of proposed improvements (including colour scheme)
- Proof of business licence
- Detailed line-item budget
- Project schedule

### **Eligible Properties:**

Existing buildings located within the DDBIA catchment area (see map in Schedule “A”)

### **Eligible Façade Improvements**

The Façade Improvement Program is primarily concerned with the physical appearance of the buildings within the DDBIA area and their relationship to the street. Eligible improvements are those that renovate, restore, or redesign including:

- Exterior architectural details
- Exterior decorative details
- Windows and window openings
- Exterior lighting of building and/or doorway openings
- Façade painting
- Moldings/trims/cornices
- Signage (excluding sandwich boards)
- Patio areas
- Awnings
- Fixed landscaping elements

Applications must include quotes and/or receipts for proposed improvements. Labour may be completed by the applicant; a reasonable rate of pay for work done will be considered for reimbursement by the Development Committee.

### **Non-Eligible Façade Improvements**

- Garbage removal
- Non-permanent fixed items

### **Grant Amount**

The Façade Improvement Grant provides 50% of the cost of eligible improvements up to a maximum of \$5,000 per application. The DDBIA will reward as many businesses who apply correctly as possible. In choosing which applications to reward with a grant, in the event that many applications are filed correctly, the DDBIA will use the following criteria:

Overall Community Enhancement Program Objective

- Project corresponds with the objective to beautify downtown Duncan
- Impact on curb appeal

- Age and condition of building i.e. buildings in poor condition may have greater likelihood of project approval
- Property and/or business owner has not previously received a Façade Improvement Grant

#### Project Proposal and Feasibility

- Application provides a clear description of the project and why it is proposed
- Project is well planned with a reasonable timeline and a clear beginning and end

#### Outcomes

- There is a clear understanding of how the community will be improved as a result of the project, with anticipated outcomes clearly documented
- Project is designed for low maintenance and the applicant and stakeholders commit to project maintenance, with the majority of maintenance undertaken by the applicant

## **Section B: Design Guidelines**

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The goal is to create a unified block face. Understanding the building façade’s design framework is the first step in organizing the diversity of architectural styles and details on a given street and on a given building. Our framework is made up of two major elements: the street level façade and the upper façade.

The **street level façade** is defined by the upper façade’s piers and the sign frieze or fascia that separates the storefront’s display windows from the upper architecture. This lower portion of the façade provides visual and physical access to the business located within and is the area in which the individuality and identity of that business can best be expressed. The main purpose of the storefront is to display goods and to project the image of the business therein. Storefronts also permit window shopping and can contribute to the shopping experience on key streets. Collectively, storefronts combine to project the image of the street, and, in the case of key streets, the downtown and region itself.

The **upper level façade** is that part of the building extending to the roofline. The upper façade consists of the cornice and fascia that cap the building front, the building’s upper storeys, the windows that give articulation and interest to the upper architecture, and the piers that extend to the ground level and visually support the façade and frame the storefront. Within this framework there are a range of architectural components within which various design elements may be incorporated which add interest, complexity, and diversity to the building façade.

Coordinating façade improvements with neighbouring structures helps to complement the design of the storefront, creating diversity and interest at street level, and unity in building lines.

The renovated façade of the building should be well integrated, interesting, and architecturally in unison with the style for the whole building. The corners of the building facing two streets

should address both streets and should be well detailed for any pedestrian activity. Important building corners should avoid placement of staircases and other non-active functions like storage, mechanical, or electrical rooms, as those make the corner a dead space.

## **Section C: Grant Application, Approval, and Reimbursement Process**

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### **Where Do I Start?**

The City of Duncan has an Official Community Plan (OCP) which is a City bylaw that defines policies for land use and development. Within this plan the City has designated certain areas as Development Permit Areas; all of the member businesses in the DDBIA catchment area are located within Development Permit Area 2 – Downtown. The Development Permit Area contains guidelines as they relate to: form and character, revitalization, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as energy and water conservation. A copy of the Official Community Plan containing these guidelines can be found online at (still in draft form)

Façade improvements **may** require a Development Permit or other permit, such as a Building Permit or Sign Permit, dependant on the extent of the work you are considering. Prior to applying for the Façade Improvement Grant Program, you must contact the City of Duncan Planning Department to determine whether or not the improvements you are considering undertaking require a Development Permit or any other permit.

If the work you are undertaking does not require a Development Permit or other permit, please obtain written authorization from the City of Duncan Planning Department stating that you DO NOT require any permits and submit it as part of your application. Alternatively, if the work you are undertaking does require a Development or other permit, you must obtain the permit from the City of Duncan and submit it as part of your application. An application including no reference to Development, or other permits as necessary, will be considered incomplete and not considered by the Development Committee.

Please note that submitting an application does not guarantee a grant or a specific grant amount. Applicants may need to obtain necessary Development, Building, and Sign permits. When submitting an application, please consider that additional time may be required to obtain these approvals.