

VILLAGE OF BURNS LAKE



FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Guidelines and Application Process

Purpose

The physical environment in which we live, and work significantly affects us. A community that is more appealing to the eye gives its citizens a greater sense of place and welcomes visitors. The quality and character of building facades in the downtown area of any community is a powerful accelerant for economic development.

The Business Façade Improvement program is possible due to financial support from Northern Development Initiative Trust. The Village of Burns Lake is proud to offer this program to improve the character and physical appearance to retail and commercial buildings in the **Business Façade Improvement Program Area** (see Appendix A) and to support downtown revitalization efforts. The program guidelines set eligibility and quality standards for the facade improvements. Each application will be reviewed by The Project Review Committee to determine eligibility and approval.

Program

The Burns Lake Business Façade Improvement Program will match dollar-for-dollar a reimbursement grant of 50% of eligible costs to **an annual maximum of \$5,000 per business**. The building must be in Revitalization Areas A-C (see Appendix A). Each business within the revitalization area is eligible for the grant. Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$2,500 to qualify for the program. This fund is provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust and is administered by the Village of Burns Lake.

Each year the that the Façade Program is available, it may be accessed for new/incremental façade improvements.

General Guidelines

The Burns Lake Business Façade Improvement Program is focused on the physical appearance of buildings within the revitalization area and the relationship of the building to the street.

Proponents are strongly encouraged to follow the Burns Lake Design Guidelines and Best Practices brochure (attached). Grants are awarded based on the merit of design and impact on the streetscape as determined by The Project Review Committee.

Eligible Applicants

- To qualify for the Burns Lake Façade Improvement Program, you must be the building or the business owner. **If you are the tenant, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that the applicant will pay for all improvements. A signed letter from the building owner must accompany the application.**
- Non-profit and enterprising non-profit organizations (tenants)
- Home-based business owners are eligible to apply for wayfinding signage to a maximum of \$500.

The following conditions must be met before you apply:

1. Property taxes are fully paid and current.
2. A valid business license for the property (unless otherwise exempt).

3. There are no outstanding building permits, stop work orders or development permits and sign permit condition requirements; and
4. Subject building has not received a previous grant under this program for the proposed improvements.

Ineligible Applicants

- Applicants that do not meet the conditions listed above.
- Residential homes located in the designated commercial area, including apartments (except for way finding signs)
- Government owned buildings (even if they have business tenants).
- Properties outside of 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 improvements, no stand-alone window replacement).
- New siding.
- Façade Painting.
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger improvements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement).
- Awnings.
- Signage (permanent on applicant property).
- *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.
- Construction of a patio
 - Discuss your patio project with Village of Burns Lake staff to ensure compliance with current bylaws.
 - The patio must be a semi-permanent or permanent.

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.
- Improvements not visible from the public right of way.
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings.
- Improvements that are started before 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 costs.
- PST.

Ineligible Costs/ Expenses

- Staff wages and benefits.
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment.
- Expenses related to improvements to the building façade not visible from the public right-of-way.
- Operational costs including utilities (hydro, gas, etc.).
- GST.
- Duties.
- Permit fees.

Design Drawings and Project Budget Estimate

To be eligible for this grant, the applicant **must** submit the following:

- Before picture(s) and a design drawing (front elevation) showing the proposed facade, clearly showing the improvements to allow the Village Staff to evaluate the project.
- An estimated budget and quotes for the project, which clearly shows project elements so the Project Review Committee can determine what costs are eligible.
- Designs do not have to be completed by a professional architect or designer, but it is strongly encouraged that the business/property owner seeks professional assistance, keeping in mind that

grants will be awarded based on the merit of design and visual impact on the streetscape. The objective is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our downtown streetscape, even if it is just one building at a time. The application may be denied if The Project Review Committee deem that the proposed project does not positively impact the streetscape.

- The proponent should make every effort to align their project with the attached design guidelines.

Application Process

1. Owner/Tenant submits the **application (Appendix B of this guide)** with designs (and approval letter from the owner if applicable) The Project Review Committee reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that enhancements meet Downtown Design and Business Facade Improvement Program guidelines.
See the application for a list of required application documents.
2. The Project Review Committee will accept or reject the application based on a point system evaluation of the project.
3. The application's approval or rejection will be communicated to the applicant by email or mail.
4. Completed applications can be submitted by e-mail to cvanderwolf@burnslake.ca or can be dropped off at the Village Office

For Successful Applicants:

1. A Letter of Understanding will be sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the Tenant/Owner and the Village representative before the start of the project. Tenant/Owner completes renovations as per application. If you want to make changes to your approved project, contact Village Staff before making changes.
2. To receive reimbursement, the Business/Owner must provide the following:
 - **All copies** of invoices or receipts.
 - A summary of all costs itemized on Downtown Burns Lake Facade Improvement Program reporting form (Can be provided electronically).
 - Copies of cleared cheques/bank statements/credit card statements confirming payment of invoices.
 - Proof that improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable).
 - Pictures of the completed facade improvement.

The Village cannot make reimbursements for expenditures without proper verification.

Once all the reimbursement documentation has been received:

- 1 The Project Review Committee will verify that the facade improvements meet the terms as stated in the Letter of Understanding, and Staff will provide confirmation to the CAO.
- 2 The CAO approves the reimbursement, and a cheque will be issued to the project proponent.

Application Time Frame:

Applications must be submitted and approved by the Village **BEFORE** starting your façade improvement project to be eligible for reimbursement funding.

The application intake deadline is May 25th, 2026. If the program is not fully subscribed by the May 25th deadline, applications will continue to be received and assessed on an ongoing basis until funds are allocated. Decisions will be made no later than one month after receiving an application.

Once accepted, the Tenant/Owner has until **December 31st, 2026**, to complete the project. All verification of expenditures must be submitted to the Village no later than **January 4th, 2027**, to receive reimbursement.

Project Review Committee/Selection Process

The Project Review Committee will review all applications, determine the eligibility of projects, and make project funding decisions. Village Staff are responsible for confirming the expenditures and that the project was completed in accordance with the approved plan.

Projects are prioritized based on the following criteria:

1. Conformance with the Burns Lake Design Guidelines.
2. Age and condition of the building. For example, buildings in poorer condition have a greater likelihood of project approval.
3. Impact of the improvements on streetscape.
4. Use of a professional designer/architect.
5. Location of improvement Area: A, B or C. (*Appendix I - Façade Improvement Program Area Map. Area A is the highest priority, with C being the lower priority area.*)

Appeal Process

If an application is declined, the project proponent may request a meeting to discuss the application to seek input on the proposal to modify the application and meet the program guidelines.

Declined applications can reapply in the current year if the program has not been fully subscribed.

Large Project Information

The Village of Burns Lake may require development, building and sign permits based on the extent of the improvements.

- Typically, development permits are required for projects costing more than \$50,000 in our Development Permit Zone. Please inquire at the Village office to determine if you are in a Development Permit Zone.
- Building permits are required for renovations larger than 10 square meters (108 ft²) in size. For additional information regarding building permits, please contact the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Office at (250) 692-3195.
- Sign permits are required as per the Sign Regulation Bylaw #885, 2008.

The Village of Burns Lake's Design Guideline document is available on the Village website or at the Village Office. The guideline is a comprehensive vision of our future downtown. Given the commitment to our community and the joint incentive (property owners and the Village) to invest in our downtown, the Façade Improvement Program will beautify the streetscape for the benefit of residents and visitors to our community.

Appendix B
Village of Burns Lake
Business Facade Improvement Program Application:

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Building Address: _____

Email: _____

If you are applying as the tenant of a building, please provide the following information and attach a letter of consent from the owners stating that you are allowed to make these changes to the building.

Owner's Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Project Description

Describe the proposed project: (attach any extra sheets, photos, designs, samples, Etc.)

2. Planned Start Date: _____

3. Planned Completion Date: _____

4. Estimated Total Project Cost: _____

5. Total Project Cost : \$ _____ attach quote from contractor(s)

Eligibility Checklist:

- Property taxes paid
- Utility fees paid
- Business License fees current
- You are the building owner, or you have a signed letter from the building owner
- Required permit applications completed for example: development, building or sign

Attach to the application:

- Photos of existing facade
- A detailed listing** of facade improvements in order to determine the eligibility of all project components. Please read Eligible and Ineligible expenses on pages 3 & 4 of the *Business Facade Improvement Program Application Form*
- Cost estimates/quote from contractor – separate the cost of facade improvements elements if it is part of a larger project. The reimbursement is only for costs directly associated with improving your facade.
- Drawings of improvement – does not have to be professionally drawn (street view)
- Material and colour choice – see Best Practices Guide (attached to application package)
- Building Owner Authorization Letter (if required)