

# 2023 Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines



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## Program Purpose and Goals

The physical environment in which we live and work greatly affects us. A community that is more appealing to the eye gives its citizens a greater sense of place and pride while also providing a positive image to visitors. The District of Tumbler Ridge is partnering with the Tumbler Ridge Chamber of Commerce to provide this program as an incentive to building/business owners to improve the character and physical appearance of their buildings. The Business Façade Improvement Program will focus on the physical appearance of the buildings in highly visible areas. Facades and storefronts of the retail and commercial buildings will be considered.

Funding for the Tumbler Ridge Business Façade Improvement program is provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust

## The Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program's benefit for improving the aesthetics of commercial areas.

- The District of Tumbler Ridge will provide up to a 50% reimbursement grant for a maximum of \$5,000 per project to improve the facades of commercial buildings.
- Each building is eligible for an annual grant to a maximum of \$5,000. Each year a building may access the Business Façade Improvement program for new/incremental façade improvements.
- Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$2500.
- Application deadline is October 31, 2023
- The Business Façade Improvement program is offered by the District of Tumbler Ridge with funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

## Eligible Areas

All businesses might be located within the municipal boundaries of Tumbler Ridge.

### Eligible Applicants

- Applicant 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)
- Non-profit and enterprising non-profit organizations (tenants)
- Home-based businesses which are zoned commercial, have a storefront and are within the specified area
- Home-based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only and subject to any approvals required by the District)
- Property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current
- Current, valid business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt)
- No outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding
- Subject building has not received a previous grant under this program for the proposed improvements.

### Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the commercial 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 Areas)

- Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (except 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 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
- 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
- Patios (The municipality defines eligible patio criteria)

## Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, 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 have been started prior to 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 and/or freight
- PST

## Ineligible Costs/Expenses

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

## Design Guidelines

In order to be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and cost for the project. Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to accurately evaluate the project, and clearly demonstrate that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

Projects must be as consistent as possible with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area. Refer to the [Tumbler Ridge Design Guidelines](#).

Grants will be awarded first come first served based on the merit of design, visual impact to the streetscape, and how well the project fits the program criteria. Building, sign and/or other permits may be required by the District of Tumbler Ridge based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Business Façade Improvement Program and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program.

## Business Application Process

Funding will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis until October 31, 2023, or until all funds have been subscribed.

Funds MUST be spent by December 2023 and projects MUST be completed by December 31, 2023 in, order to be eligible. There is no carry-over of reimbursement into the next fiscal year.

Submitting an application does not necessarily 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

## Application Process

1. Owner/Tenant submit a complete application with designs and/or proposal. All required supporting materials and documents (including owner authorization) must be received before being considered complete.
2. Staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines and criteria.
3. Applications are reviewed and a decision to accept or reject the application is made.
4. Applicant is advised of the decision by email.
5. Successful applicants will receive a Letter of Understanding that must be signed by the owner/tenant and the Project Coordinator for the Chamber of Commerce.
6. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
7. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
8. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
9. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses and proof of payment (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
10. Owner/Tenant provides a Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval and has been paid in full, as well as before and after photos (matching) and any other supporting documentation.
  - a. Owner/Tenant acknowledges they may be contacted by the Municipality or Northern Development to supply a testimonial about the value of the supported façade improvement to the business.
11. Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passed final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
12. Staff verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
13. Applicant is issued a cheque.

Please note: Approved projects should be completed by December 31, 2023.

## Evaluation/Selection Process

The Business Façade Improvement Program is a joint venture offered by the District of Tumbler Ridge that is facilitated by nonprofit Tumbler Ridge Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

The designated Project Coordinator will reviews all applications and determines eligibility of projects and makes recommendations to the District regarding the projects that should receive funding. All Eligible Projects will be evaluated using the following ranked criteria:

- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable Guidelines?
- Will the project once complete have a noticeable impact on the streetscape?
- Was a professional designer or architect used?
- Will the project be completed by the end of December?
- In the event that there are more eligible applicants than funds available to award, the Project Coordinator will prioritize applications based on the following criteria:
- Location with preference in areas outlined in these guidelines
- Age and condition of building for exterior façade applications(i.e. poor condition buildings have greater odds of project approval);
- Use of local contractors and services;
- Use of a professional designer/architect;
- Impact on curb appeal (for exterior façade applications) or requirement for interior renovations to allow business to re-open for business.

## Appeal Process

In the event that an application is declined, the applicant may request a meeting with the Project Coordinator and the designated City Staff representative to discuss the application with the purpose of:

- Seeking input on the proposal in order to modify the application and meet the pro- gram guidelines.
- Provide additional information that may reverse of the decision to decline.

## Additional Information

The District of Tumbler Ridge may require development, building and or sign permits based on the extent of the improvements to be completed.

Submit an application to:

Jerrilyn Schembri

Tumbler Ridge Chamber of Commerce

Box 1821, Tumbler Ridge BC V0C2W0

Phone: 250.242.8047

Email: tumblerchamber@gmail.com