



Business Façade Improvement Program

2022 Guidelines

Program Purpose and Goals

The Village of Queen Charlotte is a community set between the oceans and mountains of Haida Gwaii. Our local businesses form the social, cultural, and commercial heart of the community, and the character of their buildings is a significant factor in the quality of life of our residents.

The Village has been investing in community improvements such as Spirit Square, the Sea Walk, the Boat Launch facility and the development of park and community spaces. Improving the function, appearance, character, charm and vitality of our retail and commercial storefronts will enhance and maximize these efforts.

Funding for the Village of Queen Charlotte Business Façade Improvement program is provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

The Program

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

The Village of Queen Charlotte will provide a 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of \$5,000 per building/project to improve the facades of commercial buildings.

Each business is eligible for a lifetime grant maximum of \$5,000.

Façade projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1,000. (Not applicable to wayfinding signage)

Applications will be accepted April 1, 2022 and will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Business Façade Improvement program is offered by the Village of Queen Charlotte with funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Eligible Properties

Eligible properties include retail and commercial buildings within the municipal boundaries. In the Village Zoning Bylaw, a commercial use is defined as a use providing for the selling of goods or services, for personal services, or for the servicing and repair of goods; includes retail uses, personal service, wholesaling in conjunction with retail sales, commercial and governmental offices, service stations, tourist accommodations, recreation facilities, commercial schools, household services and all associated repairs; and excludes manufacturing, salvaging, warehousing, the selling, servicing and repair of heavy industrial machinery.

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. This may result in more than one project/ grant per building. In the case of a joint project between businesses in the same

building, each separate business must submit a separate application for grant funding with a cover letter that explains the nature of the partnership.

- New businesses may apply for the grant with the stipulation that they need to be able to demonstrate that they are open and operating for at least two months of the year in which they receive the grant.
- In order to enable new applicants to enter the program, the businesses who have previously received grants and are re-applying may be placed at the bottom of the list for subsequent applications if the program is oversubscribed April 1, 2022
- Non-profit and enterprising non-profit organizations (tenants)
- Home based businesses that have a commercial storefront.
- Home based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only). In the Village Zoning Bylaw, a home occupation is defined as an accessory use within a dwelling unit or accessory building for a small professional or home-based business, including but not limited to artist studio, workshop, bookkeeping, legal services and small-scale home sales.
- Property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current.
- No outstanding Siting and Use permits, stop work orders, or development permits.
- Project is in compliance with all applicable Village of Queen Charlotte bylaws.
- The subject property has not received a previous grant under this program totaling the maximum of \$5,000.

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 of Village of Queen Charlotte municipal boundaries
- 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 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 (affixed to the building)
- 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.
 - ⊖ Secondary signage affixed to buildings may be approved.
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only AND are part of a larger façade improvement project
- Permanent Patios, including upgrades to existing patios, for businesses that can justify use and/or improved customer experience as a result of the addition.

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Project must fall within your property lines.
 - Routine maintenance
 - Structural repairs
 - Roofs
 - Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patio heaters etc.)
 - 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
 - Patio accessories (ie. tables, chairs, umbrellas, heaters)
 - Temporary patio structures (ie. popup tents)

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

- Owner/applicant wages and/or benefits related to project labour, or other costs related to supplies or administration
- 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 costing for the project.

The Business Façade Improvement Program is primarily focused on the physical appearance of the buildings and their relationship to the street, and all improvements must be visible from the public right-of-way. 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 unique business area. Should village staff or Council deem that the proposed project does not have a positive impact to the streetscape the application may be denied or require a resubmission.

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the review committee to accurately evaluate the project, and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

Designs need not to be done by a professional architect or designer but it is strongly encouraged that the business/ property owner seeks professional help, keeping in mind that the grants will be awarded based on merit of design and visual impact to the streetscape. The objective of this program is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our streetscape.

Siting and Use Permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program. In addition, compliance to all Village of Queen Charlotte bylaws is required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Business Façade Improvement Program.

Business Application Process

Business Façade Improvement Grant Application Requirements

Applications **must** include:

- 'Before' picture(s) and a design drawing (front elevation) showing the 'after' with the proposed improvements including colour choices.

- A project budget estimate and or contractors quote for the proposed project clearly delineating costs.
- If applicable, a letter from the building owner providing written approval and/or a cover letter explaining a joint project partnership.
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Way-Find Signage Grant Application Requirements

Applications **must** include:

- ‘Before’ pictures, a design drawing showing the details of the sign, its location, colour scheme and content, and a brief description of why signage is necessary for way-finding.
- A project budget estimate and or quote for the proposed project clearly delineating signage costs.
- If applicable, a letter from the building owner providing written approval.

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.

1. Owner/Tenant contacts the Municipality to determine if the building qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program, discuss your project, and obtain the Program Guide and Application.
2. Owner/Tenant submit a complete application as outlined in the application requirements.
3. Village staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that program guidelines have been met.
4. Complete applications are brought forward with recommendations from village staff to Council.
5. Village Council reviews applications and a decision is made to accept or reject the application.
6. Applicant is advised of the decision by email and mailed letter.
7. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant which must be signed by the owner/tenant and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).
8. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
9. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses with the following:
 - Copies of ALL invoices or receipts;
 - Copies of cleared cheque/bank statements/ credit card statements confirming payments;
 - Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable);
 - Pictures of the completed façade improvement or signage installation; and
 - A short statement about how the program has benefited the business.
10. Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passes final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
11. Village staff verifies that the façade improvements meet the terms stated in the Letter of Understanding and provide confirmation to the CAO.

12. Applicant is issued a cheque.

Please note:

The application intake period will begin **April 1, 2022**. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligible applications must be approved by the Village Council PRIOR to starting any façade improvements.

For established businesses, once accepted, the Owner/Tenant has **until December 15, 2022** to complete the project as indicated on the signed Letter of Understanding.

For new businesses, once accepted, the Owner/Tenant must also demonstrate **by December 15, 2022**, that they have been open and operational **for at least 2 months of 2022** (i.e. must be open for business by October 15, 2022 at the latest). Proof of operational status can be demonstrated with a grand opening flyer, dated sales receipts, or other form of documentation acceptable to the Village.

Evaluation/Selection Process

Evaluation of projects will be based on the following criteria:

1. Applications will be evaluated on a “first come first served” basis;
2. Property taxes are current and paid up to date;
3. The subject property has not received a previous grant under this program;
4. Age and condition of building (i.e. buildings in poor condition have a greater likelihood of project approval);
5. Property is in compliance with all applicable Village of Queen Charlotte bylaws;
6. Impact on streetscape; and
7. Quality of the design.

Projects will be recommended by the CAO for final approval by Council.

Appeal Process

In the event that an application is declined, the applicant may request a meeting with the CAO to discuss the application with the purpose of:

1. Seeking input on the proposal in order to modify the application and meet the program guidelines; and or
2. Providing additional information in order to seek reversal of the decision to decline the application.

Additional Information

Building proposing structural improvements and/or additions must apply to the Village for appropriate permits and must comply with Village bylaws prior to and after construction. If non-compliance occurs prior to the project completion date the Village reserves the right to withhold the funds.