



BUSINESS FAÇADE

Improvement
Program
Guidelines



In Partnership with



NORTHERN
DEVELOPMENT

Program Purpose and Goals

The environment in which we live and work has a significant impact on us. A visually appealing community gives its citizens a sense of belonging and creates a welcoming atmosphere for visitors. The appearance of buildings in a city's downtown and high-traffic areas is one of the most important factors in determining its character and quality.

The City of Dawson Creek is pleased to offer a program that provides financial assistance to building and business owners. This program is designed to encourage building and business owners to improve the physical appearance of their properties. The program guidelines are intended to set a quality standard for the improvements, and they serve as a guide for the Project Review Committee (PRC) when reviewing applications.

The Program

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

The City of Dawson Creek will offer a reimbursement grant covering up to 50% of project costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 per project, to support business facade improvements. Each year, a building may access the Business Façade Improvement program for new/incremental façade improvements.

The Business Façade Improvement Program is offered by the City of Dawson Creek with funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Eligible Areas

Businesses within the boundaries of the City of Dawson Creek.

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 and have a storefront and are within the specified area
- Home-based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only)
- 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
- 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 (exception if the business is renovating or doing improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening)
- Must be an older building needing a new façade, not for new construction

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, mouldings, 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 (permanent or semi-permanent patios that will have a legacy of more than one season and give a lasting impact).

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 the improvement of the building façade not visible from the public right-of-way
- Façade improvement expenses started prior to application approval
- GST

Design Guidelines

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 seek professional help, keeping in mind that grants will be awarded based on the merit of the design and visual impact to the streetscape.

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.

Projects must be as consistent as possible with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area.

Building, sign and/or other permits may be required 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

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 City of Dawson Creek at 250-784-3636 or admin@dawsoncreek.ca 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 with designs. All required supporting materials and documents (including owner authorization) must be received prior to being considered complete.
3. Staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the applicable Design Guidelines and Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.
4. Applications are reviewed by the PRC, and a decision to accept or reject the application is made.
5. Applicant is advised of the decision by email and a mailed letter.
6. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the City of Dawson Creek.
7. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
8. The Owner/Tenant must provide verification of expenses by submitting copies of receipts and detailed invoices, along with confirmation of payment (such as cleared cheques, bank statements, or credit card statements).
9. Owner/Tenant provides a Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval has been paid in full, as well as high-quality before and after photos (matching) and any other supporting documentation.
 - a. Owner/Tenant acknowledges they may be contacted by the City of Dawson Creek or Northern Development to supply a testimonial about the value of the supported façade improvement to the business.
10. 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).
11. Staff verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
12. Applicant is issued a cheque.

The deadline for applying is May 1, 2026. All applicants will be notified by June 1, 2026, whether they are approved or not and if funds are left after the deadline, the application process will be reopened with a new deadline of September 1, 2026.

An application must be submitted to the City of Dawson Creek and approved before the façade improvement project starts.

Funds must be used by December 31, 2026, and cannot be carried over to the next fiscal year.

Evaluation/Selection Process

The Project Review Committee (PRC) will consist of three members: one City of Dawson Creek Staff member, one member of Council, and a Chamber of Commerce Member. The PRC's primary responsibility is to review all applications, determine the 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.

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 commercial establishments where walk-in traffic/aesthetics of the building have a greater impact on increased patronage;
2. Use of a professional designer/architect, but not limited to;
3. Age and condition of building, i.e. buildings in poor condition have a greater likelihood of project approval;
4. Impact on curb appeal; and
5. Projects that are using local contractors and services.

Appeal Process

In the event that an application is declined, the project proponent may request a meeting with the City of Dawson Creek staff member 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.

Submit Application to:

Administration Department
City of Dawson Creek
admin@dawsoncreek.ca
250-784-3636