Downtown Community Improvement Plan

» COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT /
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
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Niagara Falls CANADA

DOWNTOWN

COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FACADE

IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION PACKAGE

- Downtown CIP Programs - General Program Requirements
- Required Documents
- Commercial Building and Facade Improvement Grant Program Guide
- Commercial Building and Facade Improvement Grant Program Application Form

December 2009

This incentive program is also on the City's Website at www.niagarafalls.ca under Business Community Improvement Plans.

DOWNTOWN CIP PROGRAMS
GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

(Last Revised: December 2009)

All of the financial incentive programs contained in the Downtown CIP are subject to the following general program requirements specified under each program. The general and program specific requirements contained in the Downtown CIP are not necessarily exhaustive and the City reserves the right to include other requirements and conditions as deemed necessary on a property specific basis:

a) An application for any financial incentive program contained in the CIP must be submitted to the City prior to the commencement of any works to which the financial incentive program will apply and prior to application for building permit;

b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application;

c) An application for any financial incentive program contained in the CIP must include plans, estimates, contracts, reports and other details as required by the City to satisfy the City with respect to costs of the project and conformity of the project with the CIP;

d) Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by City staff, who will then make a recommendation to City Council or Council's designate. The application is subject to approval by City Council or Council's designate. As a condition of application approval, the applicant must enter into an agreement with the City. This Agreement will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the grant/loan. This Agreement is also subject to approval by City Council or Council's designate.

e) Where other sources of government and/or non-profit organization funding (Federal, Provincial, Municipal, CMHC, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, etc...) that can be applied against the eligible costs are anticipated or have been secured, these must be declared as part of the Application. Accordingly, the loan/grant may be reduced on a pro-rated basis;

f) The City reserves the right to audit the cost of any and all works that have been approved under any of the financial incentive programs, at the expense of the applicant;

g) The City is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including without limitation, costs incurred in anticipation of a grant and/or loan;

h) If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the City, the City may delay, reduce or cancel the approved grant and/or loan, and require repayment of the approved grant and/or loan;

i) The City may discontinue any of the programs at any time, but applicants with approved grants and/or loans will still receive said grant and/or loan, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements, and applicants with approved loans will still be required to repay their loans in full;

j) All proposed works approved under the financial incentive programs and associated improvements to buildings and/or land shall conform to all municipal by-laws, policies, procedures, standards and guidelines;

k) All works completed must comply with the description of the works as provided in the application form and contained in the program agreement, with any amendments as approved by the City;

l) Existing and proposed land uses must be in conformity with applicable Official Plan(s), Zoning By-law and other planning requirements and approvals at both the local and regional level;

m) All improvements made to buildings and/or land shall be made pursuant to a Building Permit, and/or other required permits, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals;

n) The size and placement of existing signage, including rooftop signs and billboards, will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis by the City when determining eligibility to apply for and receive any of the financial incentive programs contained in the Plan. The City may require conformity to the Sign By-law and/or removal of existing signage as a condition of approval of any of the financial programs contained in the Plan;

o) Approval of an application for any of the financial incentive programs contained in the Plan will be based on compatibility of the proposed use with the Urban Design Guidelines, and any other guidelines applicable to the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area;

p) When required by the City, outstanding work orders, and/or orders or requests to comply, and/or other charges from the City must be satisfactorily addressed prior to grant and/or loan approval/payment;

q) Property taxes must be in good standing at the time of program application and throughout the entire length of the grant/loan commitment;

r) City staff, officials, and/or agents of the City may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the financial incentive programs offered by the City; and

s) The incentive programs contained in the Downtown CIP can be used individually or together by an applicant, but the total of all grants and loans provided in respect of the particular lands and buildings of an applicant under the programs contained in the CIP and any other CIPs, shall not exceed the cost of rehabilitating said land and buildings.

DOWNTOWN CIP PROGRAMS
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

(Last Revised: December 2009)

	Residential Loan Program	Revitalization Grant Program	Commercial Building and Facade Improvement Grant Program
Check application type	☐	☐	☐
Personal			
• Net worth statement	☐		
Corporate			
• Incorporation documents	☐	☐	☐
• Last two years financial statements	☐		
Financial			
• Current bank(s) and financial institutions	☐		
• Current registered mortgages	☐		
• Details of primary construction lending	☐	☐	
• Details of any secondary financing	☐	☐	
• Details of any secondary sources of government funding, e.g. federal, provincial, municipal, municipal heritage committee, CMHC, etc...	☐	☐	
• List of all other current liabilities and amounts	☐		
• Appraisal of current value	☐		
• Two detailed estimates of project construction costs prepared by bona fide contractors*	☐	☐	☐
• Appraisal upon completion	☐		
• Sources and uses of funds statement	☐		
• Evidence of financial capabilities consistent with sources and uses of funds statements	☐		
• Letters of interest from lenders	☐		
• Project rental rates and/or sale prices per unit and per sq. ft.	☐	☐	☐
• Any leases currently in place	☐		☐
• Letter(s) of Intent to Lease	☐		☐
• Projected expenses or actual if available	☐		☐
• Estimated assessed value upon completion		☐	

DOWNTOWN CIP PROGRAMS
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

	Residential Loan Program	Revitalization Grant Program	Commercial Building and Facade Improvement Grant Program
Property/Proposal			
• Proof of Ownership	☐	☐	☐
• Site Plan or survey	☐	☐	☐
• Architectural drawings/design plans showing building, proposed building, facade and property improvements and/or interior layout drawings	☐	☐	☐
• Breakdown of other uses, e.g., commercial, institutional, etc...	☐	☐	
• Contracts in place	☐	☐	
• Written authorization from property owner to apply for grant			☐
• Picture of existing facade and areas of building (interior and exterior) to be restored/improved			☐

* Only one (1) estimate from bona fide contractors required for the Revitalization Grant Program.

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDE

(Last Revised: December 2009)

1) **Program Description**

The intent of the Commercial Building and Facade Improvement Grant Program is to provide a financial incentive in the form of a grant to promote building rehabilitation and facade improvement of commercial and mixed use (commercial/residential) buildings. The program applies to improvements to both the exterior facade of buildings and interior and exterior building maintenance and improvement works.

All alterations/improvements made to buildings and properties shall be made pursuant to a building permit, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals.

2) **Who can apply?**

Owners of properties (and tenants with written authorization from owners) within the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area may apply. The City retains the right and absolute discretion to reject an application received from a person or corporation which, in the opinion of the City or its professional advisers, does not possess the experience, financial, technical, personnel or other resources that may be required to carry out the obligations that the applicant proposes to assume under the terms of its application and grant agreement.

3) **How does the program work?**

The program is structured as a matching grant program where the City will provide a grant to an applicant for 50% of the cost of certain types of facade improvement and building rehabilitation and improvement works, up to a maximum grant of $25,000 per property. This program has two components:

a) ***Facade Component***

A matching grant equivalent to 50% of the cost of eligible storefront and front, rear and side facade improvement/restoration works. The maximum matching grant for eligible storefront and front facade improvement works is $10,000. The matching facade component grant can be increased by up to $5,000 at the discretion of Council for:

a) larger facade properties that are highly visible along Queen Street or Erie Avenue; and
b) properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

b) ***Building Component***

A matching grant equivalent to 50% of the cost of eligible interior and exterior building rehabilitation and improvement works to a maximum matching grant of $10,000. The maximum matching grant for eligible building component works can be increased by up to $5,000 for properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

An applicant can make an application for the Facade Component and the Building Component of the program individually or together, but the maximum matching grant per property is $25,000.

4) **What types of properties are eligible for funding?**

Commercial and mixed use (commercial/residential) buildings, including buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, are eligible.

5) **What kinds of work are eligible for a grant?**

a) Facade Component - the following types of facade restoration and improvement works on commercial and mixed use buildings are considered eligible for a matching grant under this program:

i) repair or replacement of storefront, including repair or replacement of storefront doors and windows;
ii) repair or repointing of facade masonry and brickwork;
iii) repair or replacement of cornices, parapets, eaves and other architectural details;
iv) repair or replacement of awnings or canopies;
v) facade painting and cleaning/treatments;
vi) addition of new lighting/upgrading of existing fixtures on exterior facade and in entrance and storefront display areas;
vii) installation/improvement of signage (as permitted by the sign by-law);
viii) landscaping, including plant materials (to a maximum 15% of the grant amount);
ix) architectural/design fees required for eligible works (to a maximum of 10% of the grant amount); and
x) other similar repairs/improvements as may be approved.

b) Building Component - the following types of building maintenance and improvement works on commercial and mixed use buildings are considered eligible for a matching grant under this program:

i) entrance modifications to provide barrier-free accessibility
ii) installation/upgrading of fire protection systems;
iii) repair/replacement of roof;
iv) structural repairs to walls, ceilings, floors and foundations;
v) water/flood/weatherproofing;
vi) repair/replacement of windows and doors;
vii) extension/upgrading of plumbing and electrical services for the creation of habitable space;
viii) installation/alteration of required window openings to residential spaces;
ix) required improvements to heating and ventilation systems; and
x) other similar repairs/improvements related to health and safety issues, as may be approved.

c) The following types of facade restoration and improvement works and building maintenance and improvement works on commercial and mixed use buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act are considered eligible for a matching grant under this program:

i) a Professional Design Study (to a maximum of 10% of the grant amount) that specifies the significant architectural features to be restored, the nature and method of preservation/restoration, and materials to be used;
ii) works that conserve or enhance elements specified in the Reasons for Designation accompanying the designating by-law under the Ontario Heritage Act;
iii) fences and outbuildings if specifically referred to in the Reasons for Designation;
iv) original siding and roofing materials including repair and replacement where necessary of wood clapboard or board-and-batten, repair and repointing of masonry buildings, stucco repair, repair or replacement of original roofing materials (slate, wood shingles, tile, etc.);
v) removal of modern material (synthetic siding, asphalt shingles, etc.) and replacement with documented original materials;
vi) reconstruction or construction of former and significant architectural features for which the appearance can be clearly determined from documentary sources (photographs, drawings, etc.);
vii) cleaning of masonry buildings if it is necessary for the building's preservation;
viii) all final finishes, such as paint and masonry are eligible for funding subject to approval;
ix) interior works specifically referred to in the Reasons for Designation, including, but not limited to: woodwork, plasterwork, wall or ceiling murals, or metal work, and other decorative features; and
x) works required to maintain or preserve significant architectural features.

For commercial and mixed use buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the facade restoration and improvement works and building maintenance and improvement works should be supported by documentation in the form of historic photographs or drawings clearly showing the feature(s) to be restored or reconstructed. Eligible works will be guided by the Urban Design Guidelines and any municipally issued Heritage Design Guidelines, as amended from time to time, and appropriate reference material as determined by staff.

7) **What are the maximum grant amounts?**

The maximum grant amount for the Facade Component is $15,000 and the maximum grant amount for the Building Component is $15,000, but the maximum grant amount per property is capped at $25,000.

8) **What conditions must be met to be eligible for a grant?**

In addition to the General Program Requirements, the following program specific requirements must also be met:

- Applications must be made in writing (see attached for Application Form);
- The property shall be improved such that the improvement does not compromise the reasons for heritage designation or pre-existing or existing heritage features;
- The applicant will be required to submit at least two cost estimates from bona fide contractors for the building and facade improvements to be completed;
- The applicant may be required to submit professional architectural/design drawings which shall be in conformity with any City issued urban design guidelines, heritage design guidelines, facade design guidelines and sign by-laws;
- The applicant may be required to submit other supporting documents as specified by the City (see attached list);

- Construction of all proposed improvements is to be completed within one (1) calendar year of the date of the approval of the grant. If the work is not completed within one (1) year, the grant will not be paid.

9) **Is there a fee to apply?**

No.

10) **When will the grant funds be advanced?**

The grant will be advanced in full when:

- a Grant agreement has been signed, executed and registered on title;
- construction is complete;
- the building has been inspected by municipal staff; and,
- the applicant provides proof that all contractors have been paid.

11) **How do I apply for a grant?**

a) Arrange a pre-application meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, project timing, etc…
b) If authorized to apply for a grant, complete an application form and ensure that your application includes all of the documents checked off in the required documents list.

12) **What happens next?**

- Applications and supporting documentation are reviewed by staff.
- Staff may request clarification or additional supporting documentation.
- Staff will perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the property (if necessary).
- A recommendation on the grant application is made by staff and forwarded to City Council, along with a Grant Agreement signed by the applicant.
- If your application is approved, the Grant Agreement is then executed and a copy of the agreement(s) is returned to you. Construction of the approved works may now commence, subject to issuance of a building permit(s).
- Contact City staff toward work completion.
- Upon completion of the works, City staff will conduct a final site visit(s) and inspection(s) (as necessary) to ensure compliance with the Grant Agreement and any permits pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- Submit to the City, copies of paid invoices and "after" picture(s) of the completed works.
- Upon review and approval of all submitted documentation, the City will issue a grant cheque to the applicant for the full amount of the approved funding.

For further information on this program, please contact the Manager of Community Improvement and Planning Projects at (905) 356-7521 x4298.

DOWNTOWN
COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FACADE IMPROVEMENT
GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

(Last Revised: December 2009)

A. General Information and Instructions

1. Before filling out this application form, **please read the attached Program Guide** and arrange for a pre-application meeting with staff. The Program Guide describes the purpose and basic terms and conditions of the **Commercial Building and Facade Improvement Grant Program**.

2. If an agent is acting for the property owner, please ensure that the required authorization is completed and signed by the owner as provided in Section F below.

3. If you find insufficient space on this form to respond to questions, please provide additional information on a separate page and attach to your completed application form.

4. Please attach to this application the required supporting documents as indicated in the Required Documents list. An application will not be considered complete until all required documents have been submitted.

5. Please ensure that the application form is complete and all required signatures have been supplied.

6. Please print (black or blue ink) or type the information requested on the application form.

7. You may deliver your application in person or send it by mail to:

   City of Niagara Falls
   Planning and Development
   4310 Queen Street
   P.O. Box 1023
   Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6X5
   Attention: Manager of Community Improvement and Planning Projects

8. **For further information on this program, please contact the Manager of Community Improvement and Planning Projects at (905) 356-7521, ext.4298.**

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

--PLEASE PRINT–

Application No. _____
(Office Use Only)

B. **Applicant Information**

Date: _____

Name of Registered Property Owner _____

Mailing Address of Property Owner _____

_____

_____

_____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

E-mail _____

Name of Applicant if different from Registered Property Owner _____

Mailing Address of Applicant if different from Registered Property Owner _____

_____

_____

_____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

E-mail _____

Agent Information (if any)

Name of Agent _____

Mailing Address of Agent _____

_____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

Email _____

Solicitor's Information

Name of Solicitor _____

Mailing Address of Solicitor _____

_____

_____

_____

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

Email _____

C. **Property Information**

Municipal Address of Property for which this application is being submitted

_____

_____

_____

_____

Assessment Roll Number _____

Legal Description of Property (Lot and Plan Numbers)

_____

_____

_____

Existing Property Use

_____

_____

_____

Is property designated under Part IV the Ontario Heritage Act? Yes ____ No ____

Are property taxes paid in full on this property? Yes ____ No ____

Are there any outstanding work orders on this property? Yes ____ No ____

Size of Property _____ acres

Existing Buildings on Property? Yes _____ (if yes, specify building size below) No _____

Building 1 _____ sq. ft.

Building 2 _____ sq. ft.

Building 3 _____ sq. ft.

D. **Project Description**

i) **Please describe the facade restoration/improvement works and/or the building improvement works that are eligible for the matching grant** (see the attached Program Guide for the definition of "eligible works").

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ii) **Cost Summary - Eligible Facade and Building Improvement Works** (please attach two detailed costs estimates from bona fide contractors for work to be performed).

A) **Facade Component**

Type of Improvement/Construction	**Lowest Cost Estimate ($)**
a. Eligible Facade Restoration/Improvement Works	_____
b. Other sources of government funding? (includes Federal, Provincial, Municipal, Municipal Heritage Committee, CMHC...)	_____
c. Total Eligible Costs (a-b)	_____
d. Amount of Grant Applied For: (0.5*cost item c above) to a maximum of $15,000 (as per the Program Guide)	_____

B) **Building Component**

Type of Improvement/Construction	**Lowest Cost Estimate ($)**
a. Eligible Interior and Exterior Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Works	_____
b. Other sources of government funding? (includes Federal, Provincial, Municipal, Municipal Heritage Committee, CMHC...)	_____
c. Total Eligible Costs (a-b)	_____
d. Amount of Grant Applied For: (0.5*cost item c above) to a maximum of $15,000 (as per the Program Guide)	_____

iii) **Construction Schedule**
(Construction of all works must be completed within one (1) year of grant advancement)

Approximate Start Date of Construction _____

Approximate End Date of Construction _____

E. Property Indebtedness

i) **Property Taxes and BIA Levies**

Type	**Annual Amount Levied**	**Amount in Arrears**
Property Taxes		
BIA Levies		

ii) **Other Encumbrances (e.g., liens, covenants, judgments)**

_____

_____

_____

iii) **Credit Check**

The City of Niagara Falls reserves the right to conduct credit checks as it deems necessary. Please provide the following information:

Full Name of Registered Property Owner _____

_____

Current Home Address of Owner _____

_____

_____

_____

F. Authorization

I, _____ , am the owner of the land that is subject of this application, and I hereby authorize my agent/solicitor _____ to make this application and to act on my behalf in regard to this application.

Dated at the _____ , this _____ of _____, _____
(City/Town of .....) Day Month Year

_____ _____
Name of Owner Signature of Owner

If an agent is authorized in Section F above, all correspondence will be sent to the authorized agent. If no agent is authorized in Section F above, all correspondence will be sent to the Applicant.

G. Sworn Declaration

I/WE HEREBY APPLY for a grant under this program.

I/WE HEREBY AGREE to abide by the terms and conditions of the grant program.

I/WE HEREBY AGREE to enter into a grant agreement with the City that specifies the terms and conditions of the grant.

I/WE HEREBY CERTIFY that the information contained in this application is true, correct and complete in every respect and may be verified by the City by such inquiry as it deems appropriate, including inspection of the property for which this application is being made.

I/WE HEREBY AGREE that if any statements or information in this application or submitted in support of this application are untrue, misleading or there is a material omission, the application may be rejected or not approved, or the grant may be delayed, reduced or cancelled.

I/WE HEREBY GRANT permission to the City, or its agents, to inspect my/our property that is subject of this application.

I/WE HEREBY AGREE that the grant may be delayed, reduced or cancelled if the work is not completed, not completed as approved, or if the contractors are not paid.

I/WE HEREBY AGREE the program for which application has been made herein is subject to cancellation and/or change at any time by the City in its sole discretion, subject to the terms and conditions specified in the Program. Participants in the program whose application has been approved and who have entered into a grant agreement with the City will continue to receive their grant, subject to their grant agreement.

I/WE HEREBY AGREE all grants will be calculated and awarded in the sole discretion of the City. Notwithstanding any representation by or on behalf of the City, or any statement contained in the program, no right to any grant arises until it has been duly authorized, subject to the applicant meeting the terms and conditions of the program and the grant agreement. The City is not responsible for any costs incurred by the Owner/Applicant in any way relating to the program, including, without limitation, costs incurred in anticipation of a grant.

Dated at the _____ , this_____ of _____ , _____
(City/Town of….) Day Month Year

_____ _____
Name of Owner or Authorized Agent Signature of Owner or Authorized Agent

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