

## Strategic Core Areas 2021 Financial Incentive Program

### Commercial Façade Improvement Grant

The commercial façade improvement grant is intended to provide a grant to owners or tenants who rehabilitate and improve façades of buildings within the project area, works may include lighting, awnings, and other features that contribute to an increase in property value, represent an improvement to the building, and the public realm. The purpose of the grant is to achieve aesthetic improvement to the streetscape while respecting the character of the street and historical features of the building. Examples of eligible façade improvements include but are not limited to: masonry cleaning, restoration, installation of storefront awnings/signs, redesign of storefronts including installation of siding or stucco, replacement or repair of cornices, parapets and other architectural features.

The grant will provide 50% of the cost of improvements to the façade of commercial storefront buildings up to a maximum of \$10,000 dollars.

### **Eligibility**

To qualify, property owners or tenants must satisfy the following conditions:

- An application form must be submitted together with a copy of a current tax bill to the City's Development & Emergency Services Department;
- The applicant must be either a registered property owner, assessed property owner or a tenant of a property to whom the owner has assigned consent to receive assistance under the CIP;
- Approval of applications must be received prior to the commencement of any work related to the requested grant;
- Applicants are required to provide a conceptual drawing from a design professional demonstrating all proposed improvements including materials, colours, lighting, etc.
- If a property to be rehabilitated is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, the improvements shall not compromise the reasons for designation. In such cases, the CIP Grant Application will be circulated to the City's Heritage Advisory Committee (H.A.C.) for review and comment;

- Applications must be accompanied by a minimum of two estimates from arms-length contractors capable of completing the proposed work that corresponds to the application. In the absence of paid labour, two quotes for materials and equipment are required. Funding shall be based on the lowest estimate/quote;
- Eligible costs shall include materials, equipment and contracted labour to complete the proposed improvements. Labour provided by the owner/tenant is not an eligible cost;
- Architectural features including awnings are not permitted to encroach on City property unless a licence agreement and insurance is in place subject to the approval of the Realty Services Division;
- The subject property shall not be in a position of tax arrears at the time of the application unless an alternate payment plan arrangement or agreement is in place subject to the approval of the Finance Department;
- Upon project completion, and once all invoices have been paid, an applicant must provide a detailed summary of costs, together with proof of payment in order to receive reimbursement equal to or less than the grant that was approved at the outset of the work. Any costs above initial estimate subject to approval;
- For the purpose of monitoring the success of the CIP program and promotion, before and after photos of interior and/or exterior improvements shall be provided at the outset and upon project completion;
- The property must be located within the boundaries of one of the Project Areas of this Plan;
- The project must conform to any applicable requirements of the Ontario Building Code, zoning, design guidelines, and site plan control;
- Program is not intended for residential properties, with the exception of mixed use buildings;
- General maintenance including painting, window or door replacement is not an eligible cost unless part of a comprehensive façade improvement project;
- Intended for exterior front finishing. If a building also has side or rear exposure and abuts two or more public roads or travelled laneways, further evaluation and eligibility for funding of a second façade may be considered;
- Applications will be required to demonstrate how the proposal achieves aesthetic improvement, by providing sufficient information to understand the proposed improvements and anticipated visual outcome. Photos that clearly depict the existing condition must be provided;

- Applications to the Planning and Building Fee Grant Program, Conversion Grant Programs and Façade Improvement Grant, can be combined and applied for on multiple occasions during the lifetime of the program, provided that total value of all approved grants does not exceed the individual grant cap or overall combined maximum of \$25,000 dollars;
- Grant eligibility shall be based on the allocation of funds to the CIP by Thunder Bay City Council. Applications will be dealt with on a “first come, first served” basis;
- The application deadline will be established dependent on the allocation of budget funding;
- If conditionally approved for a grant, the applicant shall have one month from the conditional approval date to obtain a building permit (if required). If a building permit is not obtained within one month, the conditional approval is rescinded.