



INFORMATION PACKAGE





Purpose

The Façade Improvement Program, began in 2002, encourages commercial building owners to invest in façade renovations and storefront improvements for their building through grants to cover a portion of renovation costs. A grant can match up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$30,000 per façade. These projects create a more interesting, appealing streetscape on the street to attract people and businesses to the area.

Program Goals

The Program works with other revitalization initiatives to:

- (1) promote the viability of retail and commercial businesses;
- (2) help building owners to attract and retain tenants;
- (3) contribute to the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors to the city;
- (4) make the city shopping streets more inviting and interesting places to work and shop; and,
- (5) build local community and civic pride among the business community and citizens of Edmonton.

Grant Allocation

Funding will be allocated on a case-by-case basis subject to the approval of the Façade Improvement Program Review Committee until the budget has been spent or the program year has ended. Submitting an application does not guarantee a grant or a specific grant amount. All project proposals are subject to a comprehensive review of the building storefront and façade, must meet high quality standards, and must reflect the spirit and intent of the Design Guidelines.

Facade Improvement Program

Criteria

The following criteria are required to participate in the project.

1. These existing buildings are (1) located within a **Target Area**, (2) part of a continuous pedestrian-oriented street, and (3) located directly adjacent to the sidewalk and passing foot traffic.
2. The applicant must be either the property owner or a designated person who has written authority from the owner to submit the application and/or to do this project.
3. The buildings must be used primarily for retail and commercial purposes. The Program Manager has some discretion to include projects that are institutional or non-profit or accommodate other non-commercial uses that contribute to the activity on the commercial main street.
4. The project must conform to the **Program Design Guidelines**.



Criteria



Design Guidelines

1 Buildings have a direct connection to pedestrians.

The building must be located close to the sidewalk and at ground-level so that pedestrians can easily see into and enter the stores. There should be no obstructions in front of the building such as a parking lot or stairs. Sometimes a small setback from the sidewalk can be a design element for the façade – this space can be used as a gathering place or display area for the business.

2 Renovations improve natural surveillance.

People should be able to clearly see inside the shop to the showcased merchandise and the shopkeepers should be able to easily see outside to monitor who is around the buildings. Improvements include:

- adding and/or increasing the size of existing windows and storefronts;
- using glass doors;
- using clear glass rather than frosted or tinted glass;
- decluttering the windows of posters and signs; and,
- removing roller shutters or painting grills black.
- adding downcast lighting that washes the perimeter of buildings in light and does not pollute night skies.





Facade Improvement Program

Design Guidelines

3 Buildings are accessible to pedestrians.

The entrances of the building should

- be wide enough to be comfortable;
- be located directly onto the sidewalk and not along the side of the building;
- be inviting, eye-catching and complement the façade design using interesting materials;
- be accompanied by clear business signage including good address display;
- be well lit to provide a sense of security and safety for visitors; and,
- incorporate landscaping to enhance pedestrian comfort and make the place more interesting.

4 Sidewalks should be lively places that are filled with people.

Neighbourhoods are healthy and complete when they are filled with people walking up and down the sidewalks. Certain businesses foster this pedestrian activity: coffee shops, clothing stores, gift shops, restaurants and bakeries.

5 Renovations fit to a human scale.

Façade improvements should make the buildings friendly to the pedestrians. The project emphasis will focus on the lower three stories of the building. The front of the building will be partitioned into sections that are more interesting to walk past than long stretches of homogenous walls. Design elements and materials such as signage should be people-sized rather than super-sized elements that cater to people driving past quickly in their cars.

6 Projects should contribute to the safety of the street.

Buildings should be well lit at all times of the day. Customers and pedestrians want to feel safe as they walk down the streets. Building façades and sidewalks can be lit with lighting that has different colours and patterns to create dramatic effects. Lighting that contributes to dark skies is preferred.

Facade Improvement Program

Design Guidelines

7 Projects address winter conditions.

Edmonton is a winter city. Streetscapes and building façades can use the dramatic winter sun to create interesting shadows along the building face, maximize sun exposure, and provide protection from the wind and snow. This can be done with:

- awnings, balconies or projects that shelter;
- warm, bright colours;
- hardy landscaping that survives winter and provides colour and texture in winter months;
- lighting to illuminate dark evenings; and,
- non-slippery materials for building entrances.



8 Projects exemplify innovative, artistic design.

The improvements should make the building look inviting to shoppers, comfortable for pedestrians and interesting for the whole streetscape.

Unique artistic elements can give a shopping area character and identity. Texture, pattern, colour and interesting shapes should be incorporated into the façade design in an innovative arrangement and through the use of a variety of materials.



Facade Improvement Program

Eligible Improvements

When you plan these improvements, please incorporate these elements in a complete design rather than checking off the elements on a list. The Program supports improvements to the first three stories of the building. The work must improve the building and street face by doing more than maintenance. Façade storefront features eligible to be restored, renovated or constructed with grant dollars include the following:

- **Lighting**
- **Exterior walls**
- **Windows**
- **Doors**
- **Storefronts**
- **Entranceways**
- **Awnings/Canopies**
- **Exterior architectural and/or artistic features**
- **Architectural / Designer fees** (to a maximum)
- **Landscaping** (to a maximum)
- **Façade cleaning and painting**
- **Signage** – only the permanent, installation components of the signage included and graphic elements are excluded
- **Limited permanent interior improvements** – the reconfiguration of the interior walls, display spaces and interior window finishes to enhance the function and displays of the storefronts



Eligible Improvements



Grant Application Process

A) DESIGN PHASE

What to Do

- Meet with the Program Manager and the Business Revitalization Zone Executive Director on site to verbally review project plans and determine project eligibility.
- Please consider working with a designer, though this is not necessary.
- Review the Criteria and Design Guidelines to make sure that the various design elements are considered in the project as a whole design.

What Happens

- Submit **application** to the Program Manager after it has been shown to the Executive Director of the Business Revitalization Zone. Please refer to the program **website** for application deadlines.
- The project will be presented to the Façade Improvement Program Review Committee who can decide one of the following: approval, approval with conditions or denial.
- Please work with the Project Manager to address any of the questions or conditions that the Review Committee raised.
- Once the project design is approved, you can proceed with the Funding Phase.

What to Prepare

Prepare the design information for the application.

- Application form** – Part A Design
- Land Title Certificate** – This should show that the applicant is the owner. If the owner is a company, provide a Corporate Registry search naming the company owner and directors. If the applicant is other, the owner needs to provide a letter permitting the applicant to participate in the program.
- Site Plan** denoting location of building in relation to neighbouring lots, sidewalks, roads, etc..
- Before Photos** – This should show the whole facade, its context and details of any concepts.
- Project Description** – This will outline what issues the design addresses and what the overall aim of the project is.
- Project Drawings** with notations suitable for construction – Drawings required for development permits are generally acceptable. Please note as well colour, materials and lighting.
- Zoning and Use** – That the current or proposed uses fit within the site.



Grant Application Process

B) FUNDING PHASE

What to Do

- Get three (3) sets of quotes from general contractors or from trades for the work to be done. Please note that quotes must be done from Province of Alberta licensed contractors and must be written or typed on business letterhead that provide a company name and contact information for the company representative. Applicants can act as contractors but will not be reimbursed for their efforts.

What to Prepare

- Application Form.** Part B Funding
- Budget.** Please use a [spreadsheet](#). Please determine the requested grant amount.
- Summary of quotes.** Please provide copies of the quotes and indicate which contractor you chose.
- Schedule.** Please estimate the construction process.

What Happens

- The Project Manager will review this information with the Façade Improvement Program Final Reviewers. Together we will determine the grant amount available for your project.
- The Project Manager will prepare the Reimbursement Agreement (contract) to be signed by you and the City of Edmonton.
- The Project Manager will verify that no work has started on the project. Only the work done after the signed Agreement has been delivered to the applicant can qualify for reimbursement.





Grant Application Process

C) CONSTRUCTION PHASE

What to Do

- With your signed copy of the Reimbursement Agreement, you need to get all the permits necessary for your project.

Development Permit

A **development permit** is required for all façade improvement projects including signage. Fees can be ~\$300.00.

*Please contact **Paul Kowal**, Development Planner, 780.496.8483.*

As part of the submission, you will need a site plan in addition to construction drawings. This can either be a Real Property Report or a Curbed Property Line Map from City of Edmonton Transportation at 780.496.6636.

If the building is over the property line, you might need to sign an Encroachment Agreement with the City.

Signage

Signage will require a type of Development Permit. You might need engineering drawings.

*Contact **Maureen Bykowski**, 780.496.8474.*

Sidewalk Permit

This is a type of Development Permit. Follow the **Guidelines**. Fill in the **Sidewalk Cafe License Application Form**. Parking requirements might increase since a patio will increase floor space. If the patio will be on public land, *contact Transportation for approval 780.496.3076.*

Building Occupancy Permit

This permit comes with the Development Permit and shows that the work is in compliance with the Alberta Safety Codes Act.

Building Permits

This is required for all work that changes the structure of a building or required some re-engineering. Work that is regular maintenance work or rebuilds the same thing is exempt. This **application** will require construction drawings.

*Contact **David Flannigan** for information 780.496.3146.*

Business License

All businesses in Edmonton need a **license** and will require a development permit.

- Once these are in place, you can start demolition and construction of your project. Please keep the Program Manager informed of any issues or potential changes that arise.



Grant Application Process

D) REIMBURSEMENT PHASE

What to do

- When construction is completed, contact the Program Manager to do a post-construction inspection.

What to Prepare

- Prepare a sign-off letter, accompanied by a Certificate of Completion, indicating that you believe the project is finished.
- Submit a summary and copies of all paid invoices.

What Happens

- The Program Manager will process this information and prepare a reimbursement cheque consistent with the terms of the agreement.
- You celebrate your beautiful building!

The Facade Improvement Program application form can be submitted electronically or in paper to:

Lara Pinchbeck

Facade Improvement Program Manager

City of Edmonton

5th Floor, 10250-101 St

Edmonton, AB T5J 3P4

780.496.6196

lara.pinchbeck@edmonton.ca