

THE CITY OF

PRINCE RUPERT

Business Façade Improvement

2026 Program Guidelines



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1. Purpose

The Program is designed to assist property and business owners with rehabilitating the commercial façades of their properties for the purpose of creating a positive visual impact, stimulating private investment, and complementing other community revitalization efforts. Participants are eligible to receive financial assistance in the form of a non-repayable grant, for eligible projects upon the completion of their respective project.

The program provides grants to property and business owners to renovate, restore or redesign retail and commercial building façades and storefronts located in either the Downtown or Cow Bay Development Permit Areas. The goal of the program is to encourage owners of buildings to invest in upgrades that create a more interesting and appealing environment – attracting customers, clients, visitors and businesses to the community.

The City hopes that this initiative will contribute to:

- making Prince Rupert a more inviting and interesting place to eat, shop, walk and play;
- promoting the marketability of retail and commercial businesses;
- helping building owners to attract and retain tenants;
- improving the quality of life residents, workers and visitors to Prince Rupert enjoy; and
- building civic pride among the business community and the citizens.

2. Grant

The City of Prince Rupert will provide a percentage to a maximum of 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of \$5,000 per building/project to improve the façades of existing buildings. The building must be located in the Downtown or Cow Bay Development Permit Areas (Appendix I). Each building within these areas is eligible for the one-time grant. Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$4,000 in order to qualify and a maximum of

\$200,000. The Business Façade Improvement Program is offered by the *City of Prince Rupert* with funding provided by *Northern Development Initiative Trust*.

The application deadline is May 31st, 2026.

3. Design Guidelines

In order 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 seeks professional help, keeping in mind that grants will be awarded based on the merit of the design and visual impact on the streetscape. Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to accurately evaluate the project so that the finished product looks like what was proposed during the application process.

4. Program Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

You are eligible to submit an application to the Business Façade Improvement Program if you are one of the following:

- 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);
- a non-profit organization or social enterprise (tenants);
- a home-based business which is zoned commercial, has a storefront and is located within the specified area; or
- a home-based business without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only).

Applicants must also meet the following requirements:

- property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current;
- hold a current, valid business license for the property (unless otherwise exempt);
- have no outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding; and
- the subject property has not received a previous grant under this program.

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;
- patios;
- signage (affixed to the building); and
- 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.

Ineligible Applicants

Applicants that are not eligible to apply are:

- residential homes located in the commercial area;
- apartment buildings;
- government-owned buildings (municipal, provincial or federal; even if they have business tenants);
- properties outside the specified area; and
- empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (exceptions may apply if the business is renovating or making improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening).

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible under this program:

- routine maintenance;
- structural repairs;

- roofs,
- non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.);
- landscaping;
- paving;
- fencing;
- wheelchair ramps
- interior / internal improvements;
- any improvements not visible from the public right of way; or
- construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings;
- any improvements that have been started prior to application approval; or
- any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

Eligible Costs/ Expenses

The following expenses are eligible for funding under this program:

- 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 ; and
- PST.

Ineligible Costs/ Expenses

The following expenses cannot be funded under this program:

- staff wages and/or benefits
- purchase of construction tools or equipment;
- utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- GST
- duties
- permit fees
- expenses related to improvement(s) to the building façade that are not visible from the public right of way; or
- façade improvement expenses incurred prior to application approval.

Note: Tenants must receive written approval from Owners prior to moving forward with the façade improvements. A letter from the owner must accompany the application.

The City of Prince Rupert may require development, building and/or sign permits depending on the extent of the improvements to be completed. Eligible projects will take place in either the Downtown or Cow Bay Development Permit areas, guidelines of which can be found on www.princerupert.ca. The Downtown and Cow Bay Development Permit Area Design Guidelines are a comprehensive guide to the City's vision for our future. To qualify for this program a project must be consistent with the design guidelines for these areas.

5. Application Process

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and reviewed on a “first-come, first-served” basis until **May 31st, 2026**. Applications must be submitted and approved prior to the onset of the façade improvement project in order to be eligible to receive funding.

Please note: submitting an application does not necessarily mean that 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 Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.

The application process consists of the following steps:

1. Owner/Tenant submits application with designs (and approval letter from owner if applicable). Once a completed application form is received, the applicant will receive an email confirming receipt.
2. Committee reviews application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the City of Prince Rupert's applicable Development Permit Area Design Guidelines and the facade improvement program guidelines.
3. The Committee makes a decision to accept or reject the application.
4. Approval or rejection of application is communicated to applicant by email and mailed letter.
5. For successful applications, a letter of understanding is sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the Tenant/Owner and the Façade Improvement Committee Chair.
6. Tenant/Owner completes renovations.
7. Tenant/Owner provides verification of expenditures by providing
 - copy of invoice(s)
 - cleared cheque/bank statement confirming payment or
 - visa statement confirming payment .
8. Tenant/Owner provides a certificate of completion signed by the tenant/owner and the general contractor or architect/designer .

9. Tenant/Owner provides proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (when required).
10. Committee meets to verify that the renovations meet the requirements listed in the Letter of Understanding.
11. Committee approves reimbursement.
12. Letter confirming acceptance of project completion is prepared and cheque is issued to the project proponent.

Note: approved projects must be completed by December 31, 2026.

6. Selection Process

Project Review Committee

The PRC will consist of 3 to 5 members and shall be chaired by the City of Prince Rupert's Economic Development Officer. The committee's primary responsibility is to review all applications, determine the eligibility of projects and decide which projects should be funded. The PRC will also be responsible for verification of expenditures, and that the project has been completed according to the approved plans.

If there are more eligible applications than funds available to award, the PRC will prioritize projects based on the following ranked criteria:

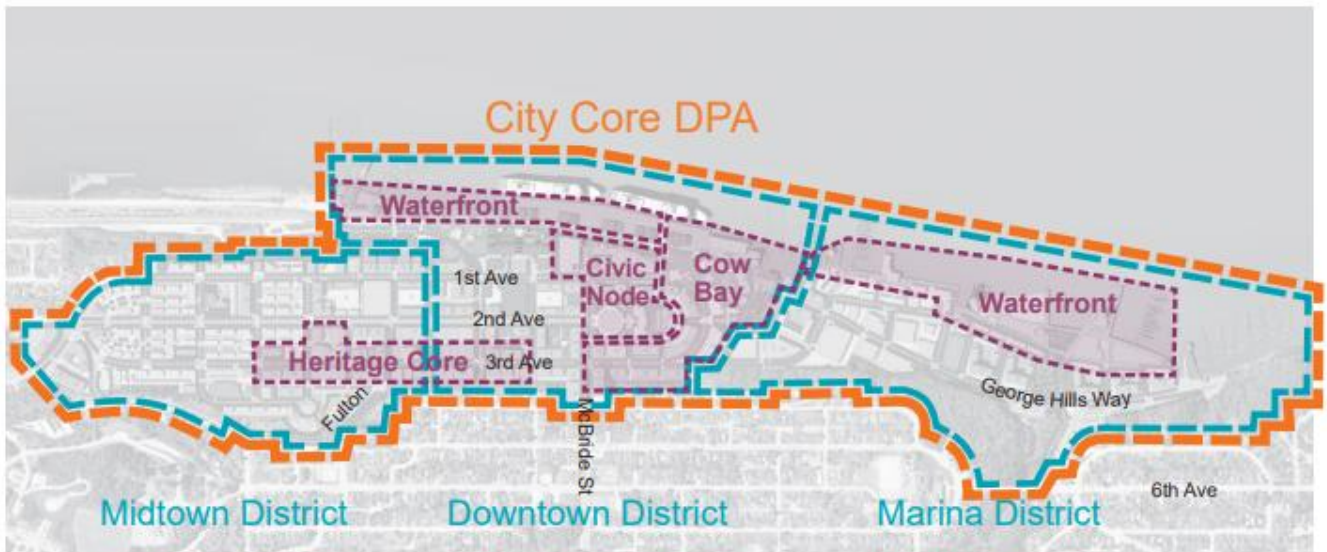
1. use of a professional designer/architect;
2. age and condition of building i.e. buildings in a poor condition have greater likelihood of project approval; and
3. the anticipated impact on the streetscape.

Additional Information

The City of Prince Rupert may require development, building and/or sign permits based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. For more information on additional incentive programs, including the Downtown Revitalization Tax Incentive, go to our website at princerupert.ca.

7. Appendix 1

Map of Façade Improvement Program Boundaries



The Business Façade Improvement Program is proudly supported by:

