

Business Façade Improvement Program



Sketch by Calum Srigley – Design Consulting

Guidelines & Online Application 2026



PURPOSE

Why Facades Matter

A beautiful community instills pride in its residents and attracts visitors. That's why the Township of Esquimalt and the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce have created the Business Façade Improvement Program (BFIP). This exciting initiative offers financial assistance and design support to help commercial buildings enhance their street-facing facades.

Your Storefront: A Reflection of Your Business

The appearance of your commercial property speaks volumes about your business. An attractive facade can increase foot traffic, boost property values, and contribute to a vibrant commercial district.

How the BFIP Works

We want to help you make impactful improvements to your building's appearance. Approved applicants will receive funding and professional design services to transform their storefronts.

A dedicated Project Review panel will assess all applications to ensure they align with the program's goals.

Let's work together to enhance the beauty and appeal of Esquimalt's commercial areas.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- A one-time renovation grant:
- The grant is a 50% reimbursement up to a maximum of:
 - \$5,000 per building/project with a single-face improvement
 - \$10,000 per building/project on a corner lot, with a two-face improvement
- Design support:
 - The program will provide an architect to the applicant to assist with design support established by the applicant's budget, should you require one.
 - The architectural service is free to the applicant and is not compulsory.

Façade improvements must be started after the application has been approved and must be completed before the end of the calendar year.

Applicants are advised that approval of applications is subject to eligibility requirements, availability of funds, and the statutory powers and obligations of the Township of Esquimalt.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

A commercial property owner or a business owner may apply. If the applicant is the business owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing, confirming that the applicant will pay for all improvements. If the property owner applies, the business(es) within the building must be operational and located within the Township boundaries.

Eligibility Requirements

- There must currently be an operating business in the building, or one must be in place before receiving funding.
- Business/building complies with all codes and requirements per Township bylaws.
- All property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current.
- Current, valid business license exists for the property (unless otherwise exempt)
- No outstanding permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding.
- A grant under this program for the subject property has not been previously received.

Ineligible Applicants/Locations.

- Residential buildings or homes.
- Township-owned buildings (even with business tenants).
- Properties outside the Township boundaries.
- Non-operating businesses.
- Buildings that previously received the façade improvement grant shall not be eligible for a future BFIP grant. This is a one-time grant only.

What improvements can I make?

The program focuses on commercial buildings, specifically street-facing façades and retail storefronts.

Eligible Improvements

- Exterior surfaces and details (siding, moulding, trim, etc.)
- Upgraded windows and trim (as part of other enhancements, no stand-alone replacement)

- Painting, including murals and mosaics (subject to permitting)
- Upgraded entrances and doorways (as part of other enhancements)
- Exterior lighting fixtures (subject to permitting, if applicable)
- Architectural features that do not affect the building envelope.
- Permanent landscaping.
- Signage and awnings (affixed to the building and in compliance with Township [bylaws](#))
- Paving (unit pavers only)

Ineligible Improvements

- Routine maintenance or structural repairs.
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings, or new buildings.
- Roofs.
- Interior improvements, including window coverings.
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters, etc.)
- Paving (other than unit pavers), fencing, and ramps.
- Any improvements not visible from the public right of way.

What does the grant cover?

The grant is intended to pay for labour and materials to complete façade improvements on main roads and, for corner buildings, façades on intersecting streets.

Eligible Costs

- Direct project labour costs.
- Contracting and engineering fees.
- Rental of tools and equipment for construction work.
- Project-related materials and supplies.

Ineligible Costs

- Staff wages and/or benefits.
- Building façade expenses for non-frontage building face.
- Utilities (hydro, gas, etc.).
- Purchase of equipment and tools.
- GST/PST, shipping costs, and duties.
- Expenses for improvements started before application approval (unless approved by Council).

General Guidelines

The Program primarily focuses on the buildings' physical appearance and relationship to the street. Facades and storefronts of retail and commercial buildings are to be considered.

The guidelines are intended to:

- Set quality standards for the types of building improvements.
- Coordinate individual projects with surrounding buildings and other projects to create a positive, welcoming image.
- Act as a guide for the Project Review panel evaluation application.

Projects will be considered based on anticipated results.

Buildings that have previously received a façade improvement grant will not be eligible for a subsequent Program grant. This is a one-time grant only.

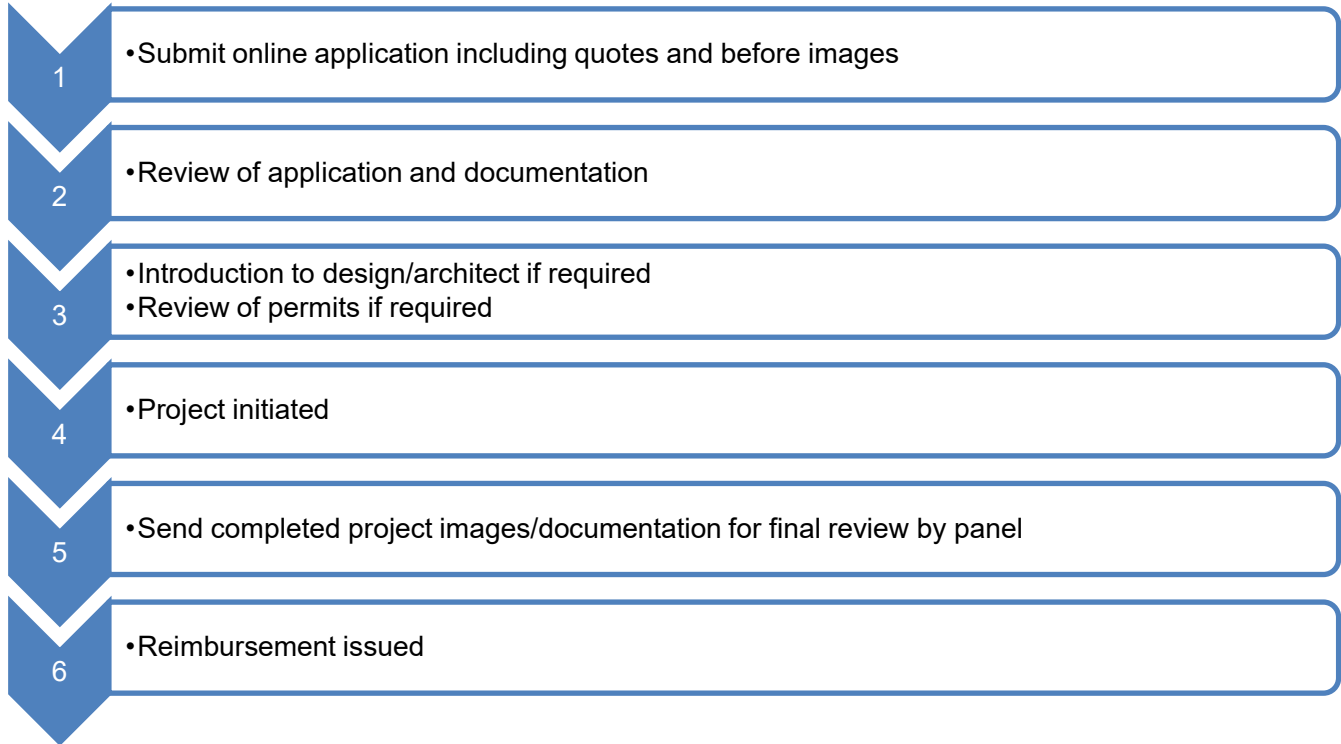
Applying does not guarantee approval or a specific grant amount.

Development, building, and sign permits are required where applicable. Please ensure you factor the approval time (2 – 4 weeks) into your timeline and plans

All proposed improvements must comply with and include any required permits.

The number of approved applications is on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the full annual project budget is expended, the program will close.

PROCESS SUMMARY



APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

All project proposals are subject to a comprehensive review of the façade, and the improvements must meet high-quality standards and reflect the spirit and intent of the program guidelines.

Applications open on May 5, 2026, and will be accepted until October 30, 2026, on the proviso that the project can be fully executed by December 15, 2026.

Beginning your project early is advisable to ensure completion within the established timeframes.

Project Review Panel

The panel (representatives from the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce and Township of Esquimalt staff) will review your applications to confirm eligibility. All applicants will be advised, in writing, of the panel's decision and, if successful, will be asked to move to the next step.

Approved Applications

- Included in the funding is access to an architect/design studio, which is not compulsory but is available to get the best outcome for the project. There are two levels of intervention – simple or enhanced.
 - Simple intervention: If you require a ‘touchup’ plan to replace existing signage, apply window film/decal, etc.
 - Enhanced scope:-A design consult can enhance your project's potential.
 - The architect will work with the applicant to create a design considering the proposed project budget.
 - When the applicant and architect are satisfied with the design, the applicant may proceed with the project.
- Projects must be completed by the end of the calendar year in which they were approved.
- The completed project must match the approved project to ensure reimbursement.
- The reimbursement is paid upon project completion and inspection of the property.

Reimbursement

Applicants must provide the following documentation before reimbursement can be approved:

- Completion of Work.
 - A certificate of completion or confirmation signed by the applicant and the general contractor indicating that the work outlined in the application has been completed and paid for in full.
 - Copies of all invoices about the project and proof of full payment. The Project Review Panel reserves the right to request further documentation.
 - Photographs before and after the work has been completed.
- Project Review Panel Verification.
 - Verify expenditures and completion per the original plans.
 - Confirm completion and request a cheque from the Township to be issued.

Application – online or paper-based.

Online - Complete the form online ([click here](#))

For questions, please email.

Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce
Terése Finegan (Manager Economic Development)

admin@esquimaltchamber.ca
terese.finegan@esquimalt.ca