



Business Façade Improvement

Program Guidelines & Application

Township of
ESQUIMALT

2023 | [Esquimalt.ca](https://www.esquimalt.ca)


ESQUIMALT
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PURPOSE

The physical environment in which we live and work has a great impact on us. A community that is more appealing to the eye gives its citizens a greater sense of place and safety and welcomes visitors. For a commercial property, one of the strongest determinants of the character and quality is its building frontage.

The Township of Esquimalt, in partnership with the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce, are pleased to offer this program to provide monetary assistance and design services as an incentive for commercial building and business owners to improve the character and physical appearance of their buildings.

The Business Façade Improvement Program (“BFIP”) is intended to improve the physical appearance of commercial buildings, specifically street-facing façades, and retail storefronts. The objective of this program is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our business corridors, even if it is just one building at a time.

The Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce and the Township of Esquimalt have set up a Project Review Committee to review the façade improvement applications against this objective. The Committee, consisting of representatives from the Chamber and the Township, may reject applications that don’t satisfy the objective.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Each retail and commercial building within the program area is eligible to apply with a façade improvement estimated at \$2,000 in minimum renovation costs. The program will provide the following to approved applicants:

- 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 services:
 - BFIP will provide an architect to develop the design as established by the applicant’s budget
 - The architectural service is provided at no charge to the applicant and is a BFIP requirement
 - The architect will also create a simple 3D view of the proposed improvement as required for a Development Permit application

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

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 or 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 currently operational and be located within the Township boundaries.

Eligibility Requirements

- There must currently be an operating business in the building, or one must be in place prior to the receipt of funding
- Business/building complies with all codes and requirements requested by the Township
- 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

- Residential buildings or homes
- Township-owned buildings (even with business tenants)
- Properties outside the Township
- Non-operating businesses

Buildings that have previously received the façade improvement grant shall not be eligible to receive 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
- Architectural features
- Permanent landscaping
- Signage and awnings (affixed to the building and in compliance with Township bylaws)

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, fencing, 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)
- Design and architectural fees (they are part of the program)

General Guidelines

The Program is primarily focused on the physical appearance of the buildings and their 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 Review Committee to evaluate each application.

Projects will be considered based on anticipated results.

Buildings that have previously received a façade improvement grant shall 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 and attempts will be made to expedite their approval by Township staff.

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

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 must be submitted by **March 15** each year to be considered. All applications and supporting documents can be submitted to:

Township of Esquimalt
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

Email: finance@esquimalt.ca

Project Review Committee

This Committee, comprised of Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce and Township of Esquimalt staff, will review all applications to confirm their eligibility. All applicants will be advised, in writing, of the Committee's decision by March 31 each year.



Approved Applications

- Upon approval, applicants will be contacted by an architect to begin design work. This service is required under the program and will be provided at no charge to the applicant.
- The architect will work with the applicant to create a design with consideration of the project budget.
- When the applicant and architect are satisfied with the design, the applicant may move forward with the project.
- Projects must be completed by the end of the calendar year in which they were approved.
- The number of grant approvals and disbursements will depend on the annual budgeted amount and the number of approved applications. If completed projects exceed available funds, the reimbursement amount allocated to each application will be prorated.
- The completed project must match the approved project to ensure funding.
- The grant is paid upon project completion and inspection of the property.

Reimbursement

Applicants must provide the following documentation prior to reimbursement:

- Copies of all invoices pertaining to the project and proof of full payment. The Project Review Committee reserves the right to request further documentation.
- A certificate of completion signed by the applicant and the general contractor indicating that the work as outlined in the application has been completed and paid in full.
- Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (when required).
- Photographs before and after the work has been completed.

The Project Review Committee will:

- Verify expenditures and completion in accordance with the original plans
- Prepare a letter confirming acceptance completion and request a cheque be issued

PROCESS SUMMARY

