



DISTRICT OF STEWART

# Business Façade Improvement Program

## 2026 Guidelines



## Program Purpose and Goals

Through funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust, the District of Stewart supports local business improvements within the District of Stewart Boundaries to enhance the aesthetics and visual appeal of Stewart.

Providing financial support to local businesses encourages investment in their façade which enhances the vibrancy and economic viability of the downtown core.

The benefits to local businesses include increased value of their property, attractiveness of their storefront, and enhanced community pride and tourism experience, which could potentially attract new business as well as residents to Stewart.

## The Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program benefit for improving aesthetics of commercial areas.

The District of Stewart will provide a 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of up to \$5,000 per building/project to improve the facades of commercial buildings.

Each year a building may access the Business Façade Improvement program for new/incremental façade improvements to a maximum of \$5,000.

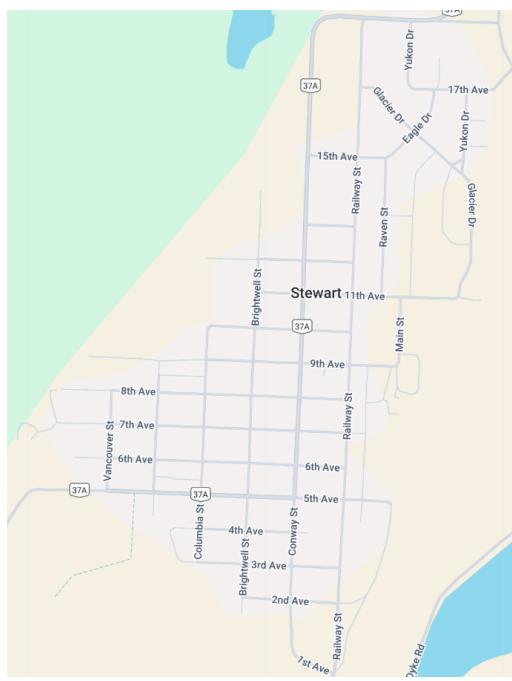
Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$5,000. I.e. For a total budget cost of \$5000.00, the business would be reimbursed \$2500.00

Application deadline is March 31st, 2026.

The Business Façade Improvement program is offered by the District of Stewart with funding provided by the Northern Development Initiative Trust.

## Eligible Properties

All eligible businesses located within the Municipal boundaries of the District of Stewart as shown on the map:



## Eligible Applicants

- You must be either 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)
- Non-profit and enterprising non-profit organizations (tenants)
- Home based businesses which are zoned commercial, have a storefront, and are within the specified area.
- Home based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only)
- Property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current.
- Current, valid business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt)
- No outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding.
- The subject property has not received a previous grant under this program for the proposed improvements.

## Ineligible Applicants

- 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 (as defined in Eligible Properties)
- Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (exception if the business is renovating or doing improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening)

## 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

Signage (affixed to the building)

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.

Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only AND are part of a larger façade improvement project.

## Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

Routine maintenance

Structural repairs

Roofs

Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)

Landscaping

Paving

Fencing

Interior/internal improvements

Any improvements not visible from the public right of way

Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings

Any improvements that have been started prior to application approval.

Any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines.

## Eligible Costs/Expenses

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

PST

## Ineligible Costs/Expenses

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment
- Operational costs including utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Duties
- Permit fees
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way
- Façade improvement expenses started prior to application approval.
- GST

## Design Guidelines

To be eligible for this grant, the applicant must submit designs and costing for the project.

Grants will be awarded based on visual impact and how well the design meets the design guidelines.

Should there be more than four applicants the total of funds available may be allocated between the projects to maximize the impact of the funding at the discretion of the District.

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the review committee to accurately evaluate the project, and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

As far as possible, projects must be consistent with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the Downtown Commercial Development Permit area in the Official Community Plan.

Building façade improvement designs should include:

-Bright colours

-The use of wood and other natural materials on the exterior of the building.

-Incorporate Stewart's rich history.

-Minimize domination of the streetscape and give appearance of small blocks.

-Significant proportion of display windows to provide a visually interesting viewscape for pedestrians.

-Avoid neon and backlit signs.

Building, sign and/or other permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived by approval for the Business Façade Improvement Program and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with application for this program.

## Business Application Process

We encourage applications to be submitted to the District office in person so that staff can ensure that all required information is provided, however, applications may also be submitted by mail or email. Applicants may be contacted to discuss further details of the project and submission.

Submitting an application does not necessarily mean 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 Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines. Generally, the application, approval and reimbursement process is as follows:

1. Owner/Tenant contacts the District to determine if the building qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program, discuss your project, and obtain the Program Guide and Application.
2. Owner/Tenant submit a complete application with designs. All required supporting materials and documents (including owner authorization) must be received prior to be considered complete.
3. Staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the applicable Design Guidelines and Business Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.

4. Applications are reviewed and a decision to accept or reject the application is made.
5. Applicant is advised of the decision by email and mailed letter.
6. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the District.
7. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
8. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
9. Owner/Tenant provides a Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval and has been paid in full, as well as before and after photos, a business testimonial, and any other supporting documentation.
10. Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passed final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
11. Staff verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
12. Applicants are issued a cheque.

**Please note:**

Approved projects must be completed by December 31, 2026.

**Evaluation/Selection Process**

Applications will be evaluated by District management staff.

All Eligible Projects will be evaluated using the following ranked criteria:

- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable Design Guidelines?
- Will the project once complete have a noticeable impact on the streetscape?
- Will the renovation offer a noticeable improvement to the streetscape?

Evaluation or projects will be based on the following criteria:

- Location – preference to be given to businesses fronting 5th Avenue.
- Visual Impact or scope of work/Improvement
- Total Cost

## 2026 Business Facade Improvement

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**Planned Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Planned Completion Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Project Coast:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Estimated) Funding Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Applicant Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Property Taxes Paid**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Utility Account Paid**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **License Fees Paid**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Required Permit Applications Complete**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Building Owner Authorization**

## Attach to Application

- Photos of Existing Conditions (Before)
- Detailed Specifications
- Contractor's Cost Estimates
- Drawings/Designs
- Material and Colour Samples
- Signed Terms and Conditions

**Application Received:**

## 2026 Business Facade Improvement

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Building Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are applying as the tenant of a building, please provide the following information and attach a letter of consent from the owners stating that you are permitted to make these changes.**

**Owner Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Project Description

**Describe the proposed project - Please attach any extra sheets, photos, designs, samples, etc.**

**Describe the work to be done and materials to be used and note how this related to the Design Guidelines.**

## 2026 Business Facade Improvement

# Business Facade Improvement Program

## Expense Reporting Form

<b>Applicant Name:</b>	
<b>Business Name:</b>	

Supplier, Description	Cost (Excluding GST)	Invoice/Receipt Attached
Total Cost		
Total Eligible Grant		

## Business Facade Improvement Program

### Terms and Conditions

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ have

Read the complete application and concur with and give my consent to the work proposed in the application.

I assume all responsibility for obtaining appropriate architectural drawings, building permits and inspections, and hiring of contractors as necessary.

I will allow the District of Stewart to use before and after pictures of the project and testimonials for the purpose of promoting this program in the future.

I agree not to involve the District of Stewart or the Facade Improvement Program in any legal action between myself and any contractors, estimators, employees, workers or agents arising from or out of the Facade Improvement Project.

I give my consent to the District of Stewart to make all inspections necessary to confirm that the approved plans are implemented in accordance with the expected standards

I give the District of Stewart my consent to use before and after photos in any future program promotion.

Payment of approved grants will be made upon the applicant providing the Municipality proof of final completion of proposed improvements along with verification of expenditures and proof of final inspection (when required).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_