



Hamilton

Planning and Economic Development Department
Urban Renewal Section
71 Main Street West, 7th Floor
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5
Phone: (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2755
Fax: (905) 546-2693

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Business Improvement Area Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program is intended to provide financial assistance for commercial property owners/authorized tenants within active* City-wide Business Improvement Areas as identified within the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan. The Program provides financial assistance for property owners/authorized tenants within each of the active Business Improvement Areas across the entire City of Hamilton. The Program aims to improve upon the appearance of numerous commercial properties throughout the City. It is understood that smaller scale commercial activities contribute greatly to the economic vitality and health of the commercial sector within the City of Hamilton. This Program seeks to build upon these successes, to result in long lasting physical improvements to the assets of commercial property owners/authorized tenants, and to bring about aesthetic improvements to the commercial areas as defined by the Business Improvement Areas, and to broadly improve commerce within the entire City.

*An active BIA is not considered dormant as defined by the Dormant Business Improvement Area Status Procedure as approved by City Council at its meeting held November 11, 2009.

PROGRAM TERMS

1. Commercial property owners/authorized tenants are eligible to apply for a grant under the Program once each calendar year.
2. Commercial properties are to be identified by municipal address to identify multiple and separate commercial units with ground floor street frontages.
3. Commercial uses must be in conformity with applicable policy documents of the City including but not limited to Official Plans, the provisions of the Zoning By-law and any other applicable City by-laws.
4. Performance measures are to be applied to the payment of grants.

5. Eligibility requirements for the Program relating to the work to be funded will be specifically identified. Two (2) separate cost estimates of the work to be provided by a licensed contractor other than the owner. Owner may present an estimate but is required to have at least two prepared by contractors. The grant will be calculated based upon lowest cost estimate, and is not to address cost increases or over runs. In the case where the applicant is the owner of a contracting company and wishes to utilize the company to undertake the improvements, one (1) cost estimate will be required. A Building Inspector will review all estimates provided for the purpose of ensuring competitiveness.
6. Buildings that have a linear foot street frontage greater than twenty-five feet (25'), grants will be paid on a matching basis of \$400 per linear foot of street frontage up to a maximum of \$20,000 for eligible work under the Program.
7. Buildings that have a linear foot street frontage of twenty-five feet (25') or less, grant amounts will be paid on a matching basis to a maximum of \$10,000 for eligible work under the Program.
8. As a further incentive for corner properties and properties where at least one side of the property is exposed to a public street regardless of the measurement of the street frontage, the City will increase the maximum grant amount to \$25,000, on a similar matching basis for eligible work under the Program to recognize the importance of flankage facades. The grant amount will be determined by the measurement of the street frontage and the measurement of the corner/exposed wall multiplied by \$400 per linear foot.
9. Restoration/conservation of heritage features on commercial properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act are not eligible under this grant program however, improvements other than those on heritage features are eligible subject to the approval of a City heritage permit. Urban Renewal staff will work closely with Community Planning and Design staff on all applications received that are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.
10. Artfully designed façade improvements or art pieces placed on private property that can be viewed by the public provides an additional matching grant of \$10,000.
11. The applicant will provide an adequate brief and rendering of the proposed art piece.
12. A jury will be established and may comprise a selection of the following: Urban Renewal Section, urban designer, Business Improvement Area member. The Director of Culture or representative will be on the jury.
13. The selection jury will review, evaluate and approve all proposed art projects.
14. The jury will reserve the right to deem what is eligible for funding under the arts component.

15. A building inspector will perform initial inspection relative to the façade which is intended to be improved, and subsequent final inspection to assure compliance with the Ontario Building Code.
16. Approval of the grant is at the sole discretion of the General Manager of the Planning and Economic Development Department and subject to the availability of funds.
17. Proposed improvements to be completed within one year to be eligible for payment. A one year extension can be authorized by the Manager of Urban Renewal.
18. Work completed must be consistent with estimates, and work proposed and identified within the application unless previously discussed and approved by the Urban Renewal Section.
19. At the sole discretion of the Manager of Urban Renewal, partial payments for works completed can be processed consistent with the payment process described above.
20. At the sole discretion of the Manager of Urban Renewal, the grant cheque can be made jointly payable to the applicant and the contractor if such a request has been received from the applicant.
21. An application fee of \$325 is payable upon submission of application. The fee will be authorized through a by-law passed by City Council. The rate of the fee may be changed from time to time as approved by City Council.
22. Approval of the grant application is at the absolute discretion of the City and subject to the availability of funds.
23. Without limiting the discretion as set out in paragraph 22 herein, the City, Council, whether or not an Applicant satisfies the requirements of the Program, may reject any application received from an applicant where, in the opinion of Council, the commercial relationship between the City and the Applicant has been impaired by, but not limited to, the applicant being involved in litigation with the City. Applicants are individuals; corporate entities and individuals behind the corporation (Officers/Directors/Shareholders).
24. Without limiting the discretion as set out in paragraph 22 herein, the City Council, whether or not an Applicant satisfies the requirements of the Program, may reject any application received from an applicant where there are property tax arrears owed on the subject property or on other properties owned by the Applicant within the City of Hamilton.
25. Improvements commenced prior to submitting an application are ineligible. Improvements commenced after submitting an application but prior to application approval do so at the applicant's risk.
26. A successful applicant will enter into an agreement with the City containing the terms and conditions (but not limited to) set out in the program description.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Property owners and authorized tenants are eligible
- Property taxes must be paid current
- The proposed work to be pre-inspected by the City Building Inspector
- Commercial properties must be located within one of the City's active Business Improvement Areas and be within the corresponding Community Improvement Project Area
- Existing use must be in conformity with the applicable Zoning By-law regulations, and other relevant planning controls

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- Replacement or repairing of storefronts and the rear of properties if used as an access to the business
- Improvements and or upgrades to doors, cornices and parapets
- Addition of new lighting and upgrading of existing fixtures, on exterior of the façade and within the storefront area normally associated with the display area
- Awning replacements and/or additions
- Brick repairs and/or pointing
- Painting and façade treatments
- Installation or improvement of signage
- Architectural, engineer or design fees may be eligible up to \$1,500 as part of the total grant awarded for completed construction
- Interior improvements related to display windows and entrance areas are eligible to an amount of \$2,500 of the total allotment. Eligible areas will be determined by the review committee
- Permanent landscape features only such as flagstone and natural stones/rocks, statuary, irrigation, containers
- Permanent Fencing
- Front-yard decks/patios or side yard decks/patios that abut a street

In-Eligible:

- Trees, shrubbery, perennials, annuals, soil, mulch, grass
- Roofing (apart from mansard roofs above the eligible frontage)
- Sandblasting
- Paving of parking lots
- Outdoor furniture