

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program (CPIGP) is intended to provide financial assistance for commercial property owners authorized tenants within Downtown Hamilton, Community Downtowns, the Mount Hope/Airport Gateway and the commercial corridors as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area. The Program aims to improve upon the physical appearance of properties within the areas, achieve quality façade improvements, support commercial property / business owners with limited rehabilitation of interior space and assist in creating a barrier-free and accessible environment. Spurring the preservation, revitalization and reinvestment of commercial properties within these areas will assist in creating a welcoming environment for people to live, work, play and learn.

PROGRAM TERMS

1. Commercial property owners / authorized tenants are eligible for a maximum grant per property during a five year period (i.e. multiple applications or one application could be submitted however the sum of the grant amounts approved will be no more than the maximum amount allowed for each property). Exceptions may be made at the sole discretion of the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development if a new tenant / owner is occupying the property and applies for new signage only. Note: grants are subject to the availability of funding.
2. Maximum grant amount will be paid on a matching basis (50%-50%) to a maximum of \$10 K per property for eligible work under the Program. As a further incentive for corner properties, the City will increase the maximum grant amount to \$12.5 K on a similar matching basis for eligible work under the Program to recognize the importance of flankage facades.
3. Commercial property owners and tenants authorized in writing by the owner, are eligible to apply for a grant under the Program.
4. Commercial properties are to be identified by municipal address to identify multiple and separate commercial units with separate ground floor street entrances.

5. Commercial uses must be in conformity with: all policy documents of the City including but not limited to official plans; the provisions of the Zoning By-laws; and any other City by-laws.
6. Performance measures are to be applied to the payment of grants.
7. Eligibility requirements for the Program relating to the work to be funded will be specifically identified. Two separate cost estimates for the work are to be provided. Please note a contractor licensed with the City of Hamilton may be required to undertake the work. For more information on work that requires a licensed contractor please refer to the Application Form or contact Building Department at (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2720.

An owner may present an estimate based on material only.

In the case where the applicant is the owner of a contracting company and wishes to utilize their company to undertake the improvements, one cost estimate from an arms-length contractor will also be required.

Grants will be calculated based upon lowest cost estimate.

A Building Inspector will review all estimates provided for the purpose of ensuring competitiveness.

8. 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 Development Planning staff on all applications received that are designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
9. Relative to the proposed improvements, a building inspector will perform an initial and final inspection / investigation to confirm compliance with various Acts, Regulations and City By-laws, but not limited to including the Ontario Building Code, Property Standards By-Law, Trade Licencing By-Law and Sign By-law.
10. Approval of the grant is at the sole discretion of the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development Department and subject to the availability of funds.
11. 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 if an applicant has extenuating circumstances which would warrant an extension.
12. 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.

13. The Applicant shall provide to the City's Urban Renewal Section copies of paid invoices for all work undertaken on the property for which the grant is applicable. This documentation is to be provided prior to the final inspection.
14. A City Building Inspector's final inspection report confirming all works have been carried out satisfactorily must be provided prior to release of any grant monies.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. An application fee of \$259.90 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.
18. The grant may also be received by an owner in conjunction with any other available City program in support of the redevelopment / development of the property with the exception of the BIA Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program available within Business Improvement Areas.
19. Without limiting the discretion as set out in paragraph 10 herein, 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 shall include but not be limited to the following: the Applicant identified on the application form and if a corporation any person or entity with an interest in the corporation as determined by the City in its sole, absolute and unfettered discretion.
20. Without limiting the discretion as set out in paragraph 10 herein, 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.
21. Works commenced prior to submitting an application are ineligible for funding under the Program. Works commenced after submitting an application but prior to approval of an application may be eligible for funding under the Program and eligibility will be determined by the GM in his sole, absolute and unfettered discretion. An applicant shall assume

the risk of paying for work commenced after an application has been submitted but prior to approval.

22. 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;
- Pre-inspection by the City Building Inspector;
- Commercial properties must be located within Downtown Hamilton, Community Downtowns, the Mount Hope/Airport Gateway or, a commercial corridor as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law; and,
- The improvements shall be in accordance with Property Standards and the Ontario Building Code and in compliance with all applicable City by-laws, official plans, zoning regulations, design guidelines and site plan approvals.

ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- Replacement or repairing of storefronts;
- Improvements and or upgrades to windows, doors, cornices and parapets;
- Barrier-free entrances to property (ramps, doors and automatic door openers);
- Addition of new lighting and upgrading of existing fixtures, on exterior of the façade;
- Awning replacements and / or additions;
- Brick repairs and / or pointing;
- Painting and façade treatments;
- Installation or improvement of signage (signage must comply to Sign By-law 10-197, as amended or replaced);
- Paving of parking lots;
- Permanent landscape features such as flagstone and natural stones/rocks, statuary, irrigation, containers;
- Fencing;
- Front-yard decks / patios or side-yard decks/patios that abut a street; and,
- Surveillance cameras affixed to the exterior of the property (must comply to the Fortification By-law 10-122).

ELIGIBLE INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS:

Note: The maximum grant for interior improvements is \$5 K

- Barrier-free washrooms;
- Ramps to access barrier-free washrooms;
- Widening of doors to meet *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* requirements;
- Interior signage to meet *AODA* requirements;
- Commercial kitchen cooking exhaust / ventilation systems; and,
- Sprinkler systems.

Fees:

- Architectural, engineering, lawyer's, BCIN designer, building permit, site plan application, road occupancy permit, street occupancy permit and encroachment agreement application fees may be eligible for up to 100% of the cost to a maximum of \$3 K per application as part of the total grant awarded for completed construction.

Other improvements deemed health, safety and accessible issues eligible at the sole discretion of the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development.

IN-ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS:

- Trees, shrubbery, perennials, annuals, soil, mulch, grass;
- Roofing (apart from mansard roofs above the eligible frontage);
- Sandblasting;
- Interior furniture, display cases equipment;
- Outdoor patio furniture; and,
- Tools.