



# Business Facade Improvement Program 2017

Building a Better Community

# Village of Queen Charlotte Business Facade Improvement Program

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## Purpose

The Village of Queen Charlotte is set out between the oceans and mountains of Haida Gwaii. Our local businesses form the social, cultural, and commercial heart of the community, and the character of their buildings is a significant factor in the quality of life of residents. The outward appearance of the businesses is also the window through which the travelling public and potential investors perceive our community.

The Village of Queen Charlotte has recently invested in improvements with the recent addition of the Spirit Square, Sea Walk and development of park space in the down town area. There is a strong community desire to improve the function, appearance, and vitality of our retail and commercial storefronts.

The Village of Queen Charlotte is proud to offer this program to improve the character and physical appearance of retail and commercial buildings. The program guidelines are intended to set the eligibility and quality standards for the types of improvements that will be reviewed by the Village office staff. This program was made possible with the financial support of Northern Development Initiative Trust.

## Program

The Village of Queen Charlotte Business Facade Improvement Program will match dollar per dollar through a reimbursement grant up to 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 per building/project to improve the facades of retail and commercial buildings within municipal boundaries. There is also opportunity for home-based business way-find signage reimbursement grants, up to 50% to a maximum of \$500. In the Village Zoning Bylaw 64-2013, a home occupation is defined as an accessory use within a dwelling unit or accessory building for a small professional or home-based business, including but not limited to bookkeeping, legal services and small-scale home sales.

### ❖ Store-front Businesses & Not-for-Profit Organizations

Each privately owned building is eligible for the grant. In addition, not-for-profit organizations with building tenancy (rentals or leases) are also eligible for the program, provided written approval from Owners is included in the application, which may result in more than one grant per building. After the completion of the first project, the applicant will be placed at the bottom of the list for future grants in order to enable new applicants to enter the program. Projects must have a **minimum total** cost of \$1,000, in order to qualify for the program. Applicants are only eligible for a lifetime reimbursement of \$5,000.

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## ❖ Home-Based Businesses

Home-based businesses are eligible for *way-find signage* reimbursement grants through this program (sign located on the business property i.e. bottom of driveway, directing customers to the business). These businesses are eligible for signage grants to cover 50% of the costs of a way-find sign, up to a **maximum** of \$500. The applicant must ensure community signage bylaws are met.

## General Guidelines

The Business Facade Improvement Program is primarily focussed on the physical appearance of the buildings and their relationship to the street. The character and design of the building along with the businesses contained within attract shoppers both for goods and services that they provide, and for the experience of walking around an interesting and unique business area.

## Eligible Façade Improvements

Eligible improvements may consist of but are not limited to:

- Exterior lighting
- 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 (if part of larger enhancements)
- Awnings
- Signage
  - Affixed to the building, or;
  - Way-find signage

## Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following are improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs

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- Roofs
- Patios
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)
- Wheelchair ramps
- Interior 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

## **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

## **Ineligible Costs/ Expenses**

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Equipment purchases
- Utilities (hydro, gas etc.)
- Shipping cost
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)
- GST/PST
- Permit fees

## **Design Drawings and Project Budget Estimate**

In order for store-front business owners and not-for-profits to apply for the façade improvement, the applicant **must** submit:

- The 'before' picture(s) and a design drawing (front elevation) showing the 'after' with the proposed improvements to allow the Village staff the ability to evaluate the project. Color schemes or designs that are deemed inappropriate may disqualify an application or require a resubmission.

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- A project budget estimate and or contractors quote for the proposed project clearly delineating costs.

Designs need not to be done by a professional architect or designer but it is strongly encouraged that the business/property owner seeks professional help, keeping in mind that that grants will awarded based on merit of design and visual impact to the streetscape. The objective of this program is to make significant improvements to the appearance of our streetscape. Should village staff deem that the proposed project does not have a positive impact to the streetscape the application may be denied.

In order for home-based businesses to be eligible for the way-find signage grant, the applicant **must** submit:

- A design drawing of proposed signage, along with a brief description of the project and why signage is necessary for way-finding, along with the proposed location for installation (including the 'before' drawing and 'after' picture(s)) to allow the Village staff to evaluate the project. Color schemes, content or designs, along with placement of signage that are deemed inappropriate may disqualify an application or require a resubmission.
- A project budget estimate and or quote for the proposed project clearly delineating signage costs.

**Note: Tenants must receive written approval from Owners prior to moving forward with the façade improvements or signage installation. A letter from the owner must accompany the application.**

## Application Process

1. Owner/Tenant submits application with designs, approval letter from owner if applicable), 'before' drawings/pictures, and 'after' building elevation drawings of the facade to be improved. For way-find signage, Owner/Tenant submits application with signage design, approval letter from owner if applicable, a brief description of project and 'before' pictures of area for proposed installation.
2. Staff reviews application and proposed façade or signage improvements to ensure that improvements meet the façade improvement program guidelines.

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3. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) accepts or rejects the preliminary applications. Village Council reviews the qualified applications and issues final approvals.
4. Approval or rejection of each application is communicated to the applicant by email or mailed letter.
5. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant, which must be signed by the Owner/Tenant and the Village Office.
6. Owner/Tenant completes renovations.
7. Owner/Tenant must provide verification of expenditures with the following:
  - **All copies** of invoices or receipts
  - Copies of cleared Check/Bank Statements/Credit card statements confirming payments
  - Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable).
  - Pictures of the completed facade improvement or signage installation.

**Note: The Village cannot pay for expenditures without proper verification.**

8. Village staff verifies that that the facade improvements meet the terms as stated in the Letter of Understanding and provide confirmation to the CAO.
9. The CAO approves the reimbursement and cheque is issued to the project proponent.

## **Time Frame**

**\*\*\*Applications must be submitted and approved by the Village PRIOR to the onset of the façade improvement project in order to be eligible to receive funding. Program if accepted by Northern Development Trust will begin in January 2017.**

**After evaluating applications, if the program is not fully subscribed, applications will be received on an ongoing basis.** Decisions will be made no later than one month after it is received.

Once accepted, the Owner/Tenant has until December 15, 2017 to complete the project as indicated on the signed letter of understanding.

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## **Project Review**

Projects will be prioritized based on the following ranked criteria:

1. Age and condition of building i.e. buildings in poor condition have greater likelihood of project approval.
2. Impact on streetscape
3. Quality of the design

## **Appeal Process**

In the event that an application is declined, the project proponent may request a meeting to discuss the application with the purpose of:

- a) Seeking input on the proposal in order to modify the application and meet the program guidelines.
- b) Providing additional information in order to seek reversal of the decision to decline the application.

## **Additional information**

The Village of Queen Charlotte will require a building permit for structural improvements prior to construction. Home-based businesses seeking signage funding must adhere to signage bylaws.

