

# Business Facade Improvement Program

## 2026 Guidelines

Supporting community well-being and identity.



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PEACE RIVER  
REGIONAL DISTRICT

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## **Program Purpose and Goals**

The environment we live and work in plays an important role in community well-being. A visually appealing business area fosters a sense of pride, strengthens community identity and creates a welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors. The appearance of commercial and industrial buildings in high-traffic areas is a key factor in shaping the overall character and impression of a community.

The Peace River Regional District (PRRD) is pleased to provide a program that supports its local building and business owners in enhancing the exterior appearance of their properties. The program is intended to encourage investment in facade improvements, contribute to attractive commercial areas and set a consistent standard of quality across the region. The guidelines outlined here are intended to assist applicants and will be used by the Project Review Committee (PRC) when evaluating submissions.

## **The Program**

These program guidelines are designed to maximize the benefits of the Business Facade Improvements Program by supporting projects that enhance the visual quality of commercial properties.

The Peace River Regional District will provide reimbursement grant of up to 50 percent of eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 per building/project to improve facades of commercial buildings.

Each building is eligible for an annual grant to a maximum of \$5,000. Each year a building may access the Building Facade Improvement program for new/incremental facade improvements.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$10,000.

The Business Facade Improvement Program is administered by the PRRD with funding support provided by the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT).

## **Eligible Areas**

- Must be within the Mandatory Building Permit Area, but outside the boundaries of a municipality, as shown on Schedule A attached to this guide
- Appropriately zoned properties (please contact the PRRD if you have any questions about zoning)
- Must have an operating business on the property

## **Eligible Applicants**

- Applicant 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 without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only)

## **Eligibility Requirements**

- All property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current
- There are no outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding
- Subject building has not received a previous grant under this program for the proposed improvements

## **Ineligible Applicants**

- Residential homes
- Apartment buildings
- Government owned buildings (municipal, provincial or federal buildings (even if they have business tenants)
- Properties outside the specified area (as defined in [Eligible Areas](#))
- Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (except if the business is renovating or making improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening)
- Must be an older building needing a new facade, not for new construction

## **Eligible Facade 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
- Facade painting
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement)
- Awnings
- Signage (permanent on applicant property)
- Wayfinding signage (sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway).
- Signs are eligible for 50 percent to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any bylaw regulations
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only
- Patios (permanent or semi-permanent patios that will have a legacy of more than one season and give a lasting impact)

## **Ineligible Facade Improvements**

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving
- Fencing
- Interior/internal improvements
- Improvements not visible from the public right-of-way
- Construction of additions, accessory buildings or new buildings
- Improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- 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 facade are not visible from the public right-of-way
- Facade improvement expenses started prior to application approval

## **Design Guidelines**

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

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements and show an example of the final design to allow the Project Review Committee to accurately evaluate the project.

Projects must be as consistent as possible with the general form and character of the design guidelines set out for the area, as applicable.

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

## **Business Application Process**

Applying 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 Facade Improvement Program Guidelines.

1. Eligibility for the grant requires that the applicant submits the following prior to the application intake deadline on **March 31, 2026**:
  - Completed application form
  - Property owner letter of consent (if applicable)
  - Design/drawings for the project
  - Contractor's cost estimate for the project
  - Proof of property taxes paid in full
  - Photos of existing condition of building(s)

If the applicant is not the property owner, the property owner must approve the application in writing and confirm that all improvements are to be paid for by the applicant.

Any improvements that have been made prior to an application being approved are not eligible for funding.

2. Owner/Tenant contacts the Peace River Regional District at 250-784-3200 or [planning@prrd.bc.ca](mailto:planning@prrd.bc.ca) to determine if the building qualifies for the Facade Improvement Program, discuss the project and obtain the Program Guide and Application.
3. Owner/Tenant submits a complete application with designs including all required supporting materials and documents. All required supporting materials must be received prior to the application to be considered complete.
4. Staff reviews the application and proposed facade improvements to ensure that improvements meet all applicable Design Guidelines and the Business Facade Improvement Program Guidelines.
5. Applications are reviewed by the committee and a decision is made to accept or reject the application.
6. Applicant is advised of the decision by email or mailed letter.

7. Successful applications are notified through a Letter of Understanding, which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD).
8. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.

## **Evaluation/Selection Process**

This project will be reviewed and evaluated by the Grants Coordinator. The Project Review Committee (PRC) will be the Electoral Area Director's Committee (EADC). The PRC's primary responsibility is to review all applications, determine eligibility of projects and make recommendations as to which projects should be funded.

All eligible projects will be evaluated using the following ranked criteria:

- Does the project meet the eligibility criteria of the program?
- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable Official Community Plan and Bylaw requirements? (These can be found on the PRRD website.)
- Will the renovation once complete have a noticeable impact within the community?
- Will the project once complete have a noticeable impact on the streetscape?
- Will the renovation offer a noticeable improvement in the streetscape?
- Was a professional designer or architect used?

Funding will be allocated based on project eligibility and availability of program funds and committed on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Reporting Process**

Funding recipients must submit the following by **December 31, 2026**:

- Completed Project Completion Report
- Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval has been paid in full
- Verification of expenses (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submission of totals on the provided expense tracking sheet
- Proof that the improvements have passed the final inspection for permits (where required) and have met all building standards and codes (where required)
- A business testimonial on the benefit the program has had on the business, if requested by the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) or the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT)
- Any supporting documentation that may be necessary

Submit reporting documents to the Development Services Department at [planning@prrd.bc.ca](mailto:planning@prrd.bc.ca) or in person at our offices in Dawson Creek (1981 Alaska Avenue) or Fort St. John (9505 100 Street).

## Final Review

- Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations
- Owner/Tenant provides verification of works being completed and submits all required supporting materials and documents
- Staff verify that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement
- Applicant is issued a cheque

## Acknowledging Funding

We encourage recipients of the Business Facade Improvement Program to acknowledge the support by any of the following channels:

- **Social Media Tags:**
  - Facebook: Tag the Peace River Regional District ([@OfficialPRRD](#)) and Northern Development Initiative Trust ([@NorthernDevelopment](#)).
  - Instagram: Tag the Peace River Regional District ([@PRRDOfficial](#)) and Northern Development Initiative Trust ([@NorthernDevelop](#)).
- **Progress Updates:** Email promotional images of your project's progress to the PRRD [Communications Department](#).
- **Events & Media:** Invite the PRRD to any grand openings or media events by contacting the [Communications Department](#).

Have a unique idea to showcase the program? We'd love to hear it! Please reach out to our Communications Department to discuss opportunities.

## Additional Information

Projects/funding cannot carry over from one calendar year to the next. **Approved projects must be completed by December 31, 2026.**

For questions and inquiries related to the Business Facade Improvement Program, please contact the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) at 250-784-3200 or [planning@prrd.bc.ca](mailto:planning@prrd.bc.ca).