

Commercial Revitalization Grants

Date Issued: May 27, 2025

Mandated by: Council

Cross Reference:

- FIN-017-A Commercial Revitalization Grants Procedure

Next Review: January 1, 2030

Responsibility: City Manager

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Commercial Revitalization Grants Program offers two funding streams, the Storefront Improvement Grant and the Commercial Improvement Grant, to support the revitalization of the City's mature neighbourhoods through targeted investments that enhance the pedestrian experience, improve neighbourhood vibrance, and promote active commercial use. Through financial assistance, the program helps businesses and non-residential property owners improve the functionality, accessibility, energy efficiency, and aesthetics of existing commercial buildings.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. The City may, subject to budget approval and available funds, provide reimbursement-based grants to encourage investment in Resident Businesses that:
 - 2.1.1. maintain a permanent physical location within the city;
 - 2.1.2. maintain a valid Business Licence;
 - 2.1.3. meet the definition of Eligible Property; and
 - 2.1.4. align with the Guiding Principles of this Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. *Applicant* – means the individual, organization, or business submitting an application for financial support through the Commercial Revitalization Grants Program.
- 3.2. *Business* – means:
 - 3.2.1. a commercial, merchandising, or industrial activity or undertaking;
 - 3.2.2. a profession, trade, occupation, calling, or employment; or
 - 3.2.3. an activity providing goods or services

whether or not for profit and however organized or formed, including a co-operative or association of persons.

- 3.3. *Business Licence* – means a licence issued pursuant to the City's Business Licence Bylaw.
- 3.4. *City* – means the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
- 3.5. *Council* – means the municipal Council for the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
- 3.6. *City Manager* – means the Chief Administrative Officer for the City or their designate.
- 3.7. *Eligibility Criteria* – means terms that specify who qualifies to receive support through the Program and the actions necessary to qualify for the Grants prior to receipt of funds.
- 3.8. *Eligible Property* – means a building constructed prior to January 1, 2000, containing one or more commercial Individual Units that are used for primarily a commercial or non-profit purpose, and is located within the City of Fort Saskatchewan's corporate limits.
- 3.9. *Grants* - means the financial assistance available under the Commercial Revitalization Grants program for commercial property improvement projects, where eligibility criteria and conditions are mandatory, a formal application and selection process is required, and future obligations may apply.
- 3.10. *Home Based Business* – means a commercial activity conducted from a residential property, where the owner or tenant uses a portion of their home as a workspace to operate an enterprise or related use within a residential dwelling.
- 3.11. *Individual Units* – means a self-contained space operated by a commercial business or non-profit organization.
- 3.12. *Local Business* – means a Business that has a valid Resident Business Licence issued pursuant to the City's Business Licence Bylaw.
- 3.13. *Mature Area / Neighbourhood* – means an established neighborhood with older housing stock, integrated commercial buildings, mature landscaping or street trees, and a strong sense of community.
- 3.14. *Multi-Unit Buildings* – means a single building with multiple adjoining Individual Units.
- 3.15. *Personal Use* – means assets, equipment, initiatives, and/or property that is used for a purpose other than to directly benefit the business.
- 3.16. *Program* – means the Commercial Revitalization Grants, which is a set of Grants that establishes clearly defined objectives, terms, conditions, provisions, and Eligibility Criteria for a recipient to have access to public funds through an objective assessment and selection process.
- 3.17. *Program Agreement* – means a formal legally binding agreement outlining the terms and conditions under which an Applicant receives public funds through the Program.

- 3.18. *Program Review Officer* – means a staff member representing the Economic Development Department on the Review Committee.
- 3.19. *Resident Business* – means a business that maintains a permanent business premises within the City's corporate limits.
- 3.20. *Review Committee* – means a committee of City administrative staff from Economic Development, Planning & Development, Finance and Legislative Services, and other departments deemed necessary to review the suitability of applications against the provisions of the Commercial Revitalization Grants Policy and Procedure.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1. Funds available for Grants are allocated annually through the Economic Development Department's budget approved by Council, or from other sources identified by the City Manager.
- 4.2. Council may choose to eliminate any or all of the Grants at any time.
- 4.3. The provision of Grants is based on objective evaluation of applications submitted by a Local Business and/or property owners.
- 4.4. Applications are considered based on the scope and nature of the project, and will be evaluated on their ability to achieve the following objectives:
 - 4.4.1. Strengthen the economic viability and commercial activity of mature neighbourhoods;
 - 4.4.2. Enhance the appearance, functionality, and accessibility of commercial buildings, going beyond basic maintenance or cosmetic changes;
 - 4.4.3. Activate vacant or underutilized commercial spaces;
 - 4.4.4. Attract and retain commercial tenants in mature neighbourhoods;
 - 4.4.5. Support the long-term growth and resilience of local businesses; and/or
 - 4.4.6. Contribute to the vibrancy and overall enhancement of mature neighborhoods.
- 4.5. Applications are reviewed by the Review Committee in the order they are received. The Review Committee will determine final eligibility and approval, and decisions made by the Review Committee are not subject to appeal.
- 4.6. Grants are available to Resident Businesses and Non-profit organizations for funding for projects that align with the purpose and objectives of the Program.
- 4.7. Home Based Businesses are ineligible for the Program.
- 4.8. Projects must be undertaken within a building or unit that qualifies as an Eligible Property.
- 4.9. Applicants must be either the property owner or a tenant with at least three (3) years remaining on their lease from the Application Date.
- 4.10. Grants will only be provided for improvements, features, or installations that directly support the operation, functionality, accessibility, or visual enhancement of the commercial property or business. Funding will not be provided for items intended for Personal Use or benefit.

- 4.11. Applications and projects must meet a minimum of \$10,000 in eligible costs.
- 4.12. The maximum amount available under each Grant is as follows:
 - 4.12.1. \$15,000 per project for the Storefront Improvement Grant.
 - 4.12.1.1. Individual Units within a multi-unit building may apply independently; however, the total combined funding for all units within the same building shall not exceed \$45,000 over a five-year period, regardless of the number of applicants.
 - 4.12.2. \$10,000 per project for the Commercial Improvement Grant.
 - 4.12.2.1. In the case of Multi-Unit Buildings, the maximum funding available is \$10,000 per application per Individual Unit, not to exceed a total of \$30,000 for the entire building within a five-year period.
- 4.13. Each individual business or Individual Unit is eligible to receive funding from each Grant stream (Storefront or Commercial) only once within a five-year period, starting from the date funds are disbursed.
- 4.14. All efforts shall be taken to reduce risk to the City. These efforts include but are not limited to:
 - 4.14.1. Successful Applicants will be required to enter into, and abide by, a binding Program Agreement.
 - 4.14.2. Grants will only be provided as a reimbursement at the completion of the project, and only after the Applicant has submitted sufficient documentation to verify that all the conditions of the funding have been met to the satisfaction of the Review Committee.
 - 4.14.3. Grants require matching funds to be provided by the Applicant, and are subject to the following limitations:
 - 4.14.3.1. will not exceed 50% of eligible costs/expenses for goods and services; and
 - 4.14.3.2. will not exceed the maximum of the Grant allocations.
 - 4.14.4. Applicants must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Review Committee, that they have the resources necessary to complete the project/initiative as outlined in the application.
 - 4.14.5. Applicants who are found to be in violation of a Program Agreement may be, at the discretion of the Review Committee, prohibited from applying for any Program for a period of 10 years.
- 4.15. Every effort shall be taken to maintain transparency and integrity of the Program. These efforts include but are not limited to:

- 4.15.1. Records of decisions of the Program Review Officer/Review Committee to be maintained in accordance to the City's Records Retention Bylaw; and
- 4.16. Grant recipients will be listed on the City's website annually and included in the tri-annual financial report at least once per calendar year.
- 4.17. Projects and initiatives that involve property and/or building improvements, must adhere to all applicable requirements of the Land Use Bylaw, and codes/standards to be eligible for reimbursement.
- 4.18. In-kind labour and any expenses incurred from a business that shares an ownership structure with the Applicant is considered an ineligible expense.

5. AUTHORITY / RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPLEMENT

- 5.1. The City Manager is authorized to establish procedures for the implementation of this Policy which are consistent with the Guiding Principles.

Commercial Revitalization Grants

Date Issued: May 27, 2025

Responsibility: City Manager

Cross Reference:

- FIN-017-C Commercial Revitalization Grants Policy
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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To set out the process to review, approve, and administer the Program, as referenced in the Commercial Revitalization Grants Policy, FIN-017-C.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. *Applicant* – means the individual, organization, or business submitting an application for financial support through the Commercial Revitalization Grants Program.
- 2.2. *Application Date* – means the date on which the application was acknowledged as received by the Program Review Officer.

2.3. *Asset* – means any permanent improvement, fixture, or system installed as part of an approved project under the Program. Assets do not include movable property or chattels.

2.4. *Business* – means:

- 2.4.1. a commercial, merchandising, or industrial activity or undertaking;
- 2.4.2. a profession, trade, occupation, calling, or employment; or
- 2.4.3. an activity providing goods or services

whether or not for profit and however organized or formed, including a co-operative or association of persons.

2.5. *Business Licence* – means a licence issued pursuant to the City's Business Licence Bylaw.

2.6. *Chattel* - means personal property that is movable between locations, as opposed to real property, which has a fixed location.

2.7. *City* – means the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

2.8. *Council* – means the municipal Council for the City of Fort Saskatchewan.

2.9. *City Manager* – means the Chief Administrative Officer for the City or their designate.

2.10. *Commercial Property* – means Property identified for commercial uses as defined in the City's Land-Use Bylaw.

2.11. *Completion Date* – means the date which all work on the proposed project must be completed to the satisfaction of the Review Committee.

2.12. *Eligibility Criteria* – means terms that specify who qualifies to receive support through the Program and the actions necessary to qualify for the Grants prior to receipt of funds.

2.13. *Eligible Expense* – means those expenses related to an approved project as outlined in the Program Agreement.

2.14. *Eligible Property* – means a building constructed prior to January 1, 2000, containing one or more commercial Individual Units that are used primarily for a commercial or non-profit purpose, and is located within the City of Fort Saskatchewan's corporate limits.

2.15. *Fixture* - means an object that is permanently attached to a property and cannot be moved without causing damage to the property.

2.16. *Grants* - means the financial assistance available under the Commercial Revitalization Grants program for commercial property improvement projects, where eligibility criteria and conditions are mandatory, a formal application and selection process is required, and future obligations may apply.

2.17. *Home Based Business* – means a commercial activity conducted from a residential property, where the owner or tenant uses a portion of their home as a workspace to operate an enterprise or related use within a residential dwelling.

- 2.18. *Individual Unit* – means a self-contained space operated by a commercial business or non-profit organization.
- 2.19. *Lease* - means contractual arrangement in which one party, the lessor, grants another party, the lessee, the right to use an asset or property for a specified period in exchange for periodic rental payments.
- 2.20. *Local Business* – means a Business that has a valid Resident Business Licence issued pursuant to the City's Business Licence Bylaw.
- 2.21. *Mature Area / Neighborhood* – means an established neighborhood with older housing stock, integrated commercial buildings, mature landscaping or street trees, and a strong sense of community.
- 2.22. *Multi-Unit Building* – means a single building with multiple adjoining Individual Units.
- 2.23. *Mural* - means a form of graphic artwork that is painted, drawn, or digitally produced for public display, and is either mounted on or painted directly onto an exterior wall or other permanent exterior surface.
- 2.24. *Personal Use* – means assets, equipment, initiatives, and/or property that is used for a purpose other than to directly benefit the business.
- 2.25. *Program* – means the Commercial Revitalization Grants, which is a set of Grants that establishes clearly defined objectives, terms, conditions, provisions, and Eligibility Criteria for a recipient to have access to public funds through an objective assessment and selection process.
- 2.26. *Program Agreement* – means a formal legally binding agreement outlining the terms and conditions under which an Applicant receives public funds through the Program.
- 2.27. *Program Review Officer* – means a staff member representing the Economic Development Department on the Review Committee.
- 2.28. *Project Inspection* – means the periodic inspection by the Project Review Officer and/or appropriate City staff to determine an Applicant's qualification for the Program, review project progress, and to evaluate the completed project with respect to the Program Agreement.
- 2.29. *Property* – means a parcel of land described in a Certificate of Title, including any buildings or structures located on it, and contained within defined lot lines.
- 2.30. *Resident Business* – means a business that maintains a permanent business premises within the City's corporate limits.
- 2.31. *Review Committee* – means a committee of City administrative staff from Economic Development, Planning & Development, Finance and Legislative Services, and other departments deemed necessary to review the suitability of applications against the provisions of the Commercial Development Grants Policy and Procedure.
- 2.32. *Small Business* – means a for-profit business with less than 50 employees.

- 2.33. *Storefront* – means the portion of the Property or building that enables direct physical and visual contact between the street and/or pedestrian zone and the interior of the building.
- 2.34. *Tenant* – means a person or entity that occupies a commercial property under a lease agreement with the property owner.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1.1. Applicants must demonstrate how their proposal will enhance the City's economic well-being by aligning with the following objectives:
- 3.1.1.1. Strengthen the economic viability and commercial activity of mature neighborhoods;
 - 3.1.1.2. Enhance the appearance, functionality, and accessibility of commercial buildings, going beyond basic maintenance or cosmetic changes;
 - 3.1.1.3. Activate vacant or underutilized commercial spaces;
 - 3.1.1.4. Attract and retain commercial tenants in mature neighborhoods;
 - 3.1.1.5. Support the long-term growth and resilience of local businesses; and
 - 3.1.1.6. Contribute to the vibrancy and overall enhancement of mature neighborhoods.
- 3.1.2. Funds available for the Program are allocated annually through the Economic Development Department's budget approved by Council, or from other sources identified by the City Manager.
- 3.1.3. In no way shall Grants received from the City be seen as an endorsement of products, services, or ideas of any Applicant.
- 3.1.4. Applications are reviewed in an impartial manner by the Review Committee.
- 3.1.5. Grants are available to Resident Businesses and non-profit organizations for funding for projects that align with the purpose and objectives of the Program.
- 3.1.6. Home Based Businesses are ineligible for the Program.
- 3.1.7. Applicants are required to possess a valid Business Licence.
- 3.1.8. The Grant intake period will be determined by the City Manager and availability of Program funds, and will be publicly promoted on the City's website. Applications will be reviewed and awarded in the order in which they are received.
- 3.1.9. Applications and projects must meet a minimum of \$10,000 in eligible costs.
- 3.1.10. Grants will be provided as a reimbursement for a portion of Eligible Expenses at the completion of the project, and only if all of the Eligibility Criteria have been met.

- 3.1.11. Information on Grants awarded will be published on the City's website annually and reported in the tri-annual financial report. This information may include details such as:
 - 3.1.11.1. amount of Grant approved;
 - 3.1.11.2. recipient of the Grant;
 - 3.1.11.3. total estimated project cost;
 - 3.1.11.4. nature and scope of the project;
 - 3.1.11.5. expected impacts/benefits to the community; and
 - 3.1.11.6. actual amount of Grant provided at project completion.
- 3.1.12. Applicants may, at the request of the Review Committee, be required to demonstrate that they possess the resources necessary to complete the project as outlined.
- 3.1.13. Applicants must be in good standing with the City and not be in arrears on taxes, utilities, fees, fines, or other amounts.
- 3.1.14. Applicants found to have falsified documents submitted in accordance with the Application Requirements or Final Documentation and Reporting sections of the Procedure , or submit information that is misleading, shall immediately reimburse the City any funds received from a Program.

3.2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.2.1. The City Manager shall:
 - 3.2.1.1. select members of the Review Committee;
 - 3.2.1.2. approve Program Agreements between the City and recipient;
 - 3.2.1.3. identify sources of funds; and
 - 3.2.1.4. establish program period, during which applications can be submitted.
- 3.2.2. The Review Committee shall:
 - 3.2.2.1. review and evaluate applications in an objective manner;
 - 3.2.2.2. seek additional information when necessary to make an informed decision on an application;
 - 3.2.2.3. establish the terms of the Program Agreements;
 - 3.2.2.4. provide additional definition and interpretation of the boundaries and terms of the Grants as required;
 - 3.2.2.5. recommend changes to these Procedures to the City Manager;
 - 3.2.2.6. evaluate the Grants annually and make recommendations to the City Manager regarding their continuation, cessation, and/or ongoing implementation; and
 - 3.2.2.7. meet every two months or as needed.

3.2.3. The Program Review Officer shall:

- 3.2.3.1. serve as the City's primary contact for receipt of applications;
- 3.2.3.2. evaluate applications for completeness;
- 3.2.3.3. prepare reports on applications to the Review Committee;
- 3.2.3.4. maintain records of decisions of the Review Committee;
- 3.2.3.5. prepare appropriate schedules and documentation pursuant to the Program Procedures and Policy; and
- 3.2.3.6. conduct Project Inspections of the project as necessary.

3.2.4. The Applicant shall:

- 3.2.4.1. provide all documentation required by the application, and requested by the Review Committee;
- 3.2.4.2. adhere to the stipulations and conditions of the Program Agreement;
- 3.2.4.3. obtain all necessary permits and licences;
- 3.2.4.4. provide all necessary reports and documentation at the conclusion of the project;
- 3.2.4.5. ensure the project is complete by the Completion Date stated within the Program Agreement;
- 3.2.4.6. ensure general upkeep and maintenance of the Property pursuant to the City's Community Standards Bylaw; and
- 3.2.4.7. ensure all documentation is accurate and complete.

3.3. PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

- 3.3.1. Council may choose to eliminate any of the Grants at any time.
- 3.3.2. The delivery of Grants funding is subject to the terms of the Program Agreement.
- 3.3.3. Submitting an application does not commit the City to enter into a Program Agreement.
- 3.3.4. The acceptance of an application does not constitute approval, or that a Program Agreement will actually be entered into by the City.
- 3.3.5. The Program period during which applications can be submitted is at the discretion of the City Manager.
- 3.3.6. Each individual business or Individual Unit is eligible to receive funding from each Grant stream (Storefront or Commercial) only once within a five-year period, starting from the date funds are disbursed.
- 3.3.7. Funds are allocated at the discretion of the Review Committee based on the maximum amount under the Program, available funds, as well as the scope and nature of the project, and its alignment with the Program's purpose and objectives.

- 3.3.8. All pending reimbursements must be identified and submitted to the Finance Department by December 31 of the project year to ensure that appropriate accruals are recorded and funds are reserved for reimbursement.

3.4. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 3.4.1. Applications submitted under the Program must include the following components:
- 3.4.1.1. a completed application form;
 - 3.4.1.2. detailed explanation, written and graphic, of the project to be undertaken and how it reflects the Guiding Principles of the Policy and Procedure;
 - 3.4.1.3. project costing, detailing the eligible expenses for which the Applicant is seeking support (if necessary, the Review Committee may request a minimum of two quotes to verify project costing);
 - 3.4.1.4. photographs of the current property/facility and renderings/drawings of the expected results;
 - 3.4.1.5. current Land Title Certificate and/or a Corporate Registry Search if the property owner is a company;
 - 3.4.1.6. written permission from the Property owner if the applicant is a tenant of the building;
 - 3.4.1.7. tenants must submit a lease agreement demonstrating a minimum of three years remaining from the Application Date;
 - 3.4.1.8. written agreement to obtain a valid development permit and valid building permit before the Program Agreement is executed, if applicable.
- 3.4.2. Applicants shall obtain all necessary Development and Safety Code permits and ensure compliance prior to the release of funding.;
- 3.4.3. Projects that propose to modify buildings or property designated under the Alberta Historical Resources Act, or identified as being of historic interest to the City or the Province of Alberta may be subject to additional requests for information;
- 3.4.4. The Review Committee may request additional information to verify that the Applicant possesses the resources to complete the project as outlined (this can include but is not limited to a list of similar projects completed, financial statements, letter of credit, etc.); and
- 3.4.5. Applicants must possess a valid City of Fort Saskatchewan Business Licence and carry the required insurance. If applicable, applicants must also be licensed by the Province of Alberta. Proof of insurance and relevant certifications may be requested at the City's discretion.
- 3.4.6. Applications submitted under the Program for a mural must include the following additional components:
- 3.4.6.1. a concept drawing or rendering of the proposed mural; and
 - 3.4.6.2. a brief description of the theme and inspiration.

3.5. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.5.1. Applicants are encouraged to consult with the Program Review Officer, or the Economic Development Department, prior to submitting an application.
- 3.5.2. Completed applications will be submitted to the Program Review Officer.
- 3.5.3. The Program Review Officer will acknowledge receipt of the application and the Application Date.
- 3.5.4. Costs related to the project incurred prior to the Application Date will not be eligible for the Incentive.
- 3.5.5. Costs related to the project incurred after the Application Date, but before the Program Agreement is executed may be considered eligible at the discretion of the Review Committee.
- 3.5.6. Prior to approval, the Project Review Officer along with appropriate City staff may conduct an inspection of the property/facility and/or proposed work site to determine the status of the property prior to the project commencing.

3.6. APPLICATION REVIEW

- 3.6.1. All completed applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the Review Committee against the eligibility criteria and objectives outlined in the Policy and Procedure.
- 3.6.2. The Review Committee will meet every two months or as required to review applications.
- 3.6.3. The Review Committee will assess applications and recommend approval, modification, or refusal to the City Manager.
- 3.6.4. The Review Committee will determine whether an application is in compliance with the Policy and Procedure, including the eligibility of proposed costs/expenses and the appropriate allocation of funds based on the nature and scope of the project.
- 3.6.5. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received.
- 3.6.6. The Review Committee may, at its discretion, approve a funding amount lower than requested, based on project merit, scope, and available budget.
- 3.6.7. All decisions of the Review Committee are final and not subject to appeal.

3.7. PROJECT COMPLETION AND REIMBURSEMENT

3.7.1 PROJECT COMPLETION

- 3.7.1.1. Projects must be physically completed by December 31 of the year of approval, unless an extension has been granted in writing by the Program Review Officer.

- 3.7.1.2. All required final reporting and documentation must be submitted no later than December 31 of the calendar year of the project approval, unless an extension has been granted in writing by the Program Review Officer, in order to be eligible for reimbursement.
- 3.7.1.3. Projects that are not completed by December 31, or that fail to submit required final reporting and documentation by December 31, will be considered ineligible for reimbursement, unless an extension has been granted in writing by the Program Review Officer.

3.7.2 REIMBURSEMENT OF PROJECT COSTS

- 3.7.2.1. City funds will only be provided once relevant documentation and reporting are received by the Project Review Officer and approved by the Review Committee.
- 3.7.2.2. City funds will only be provided for eligible costs/expenses as identified by the Program Agreement and shall be the lesser of:
 - a. the allocation approved by the Review Committee; or
 - b. the portion of actual costs/expenses as calculated in accordance with the maximum eligible assistance.
- 3.7.2.3. City funds will only be provided once all conditions of applicable permits have been satisfied.
- 3.7.2.4. City funds will only be provided for the purpose identified in the Program Agreement; no other costs/expenses will be eligible.
- 3.7.2.5. Applicants will not be eligible for reimbursement if at the time of completion they are in arrears for taxes, utilities, fines, or other fees owed to the City.
- 3.7.2.6. The Applicant is responsible for payment of all invoices, and costs associated with the Asset.

3.8. GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND GUIDELINES

3.8.1. STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANT

3.8.1.1. PURPOSE

- a. The Storefront Improvement Grant encourages investment in exterior and frontage improvements that enhance the appearance, accessibility, and functionality of buildings and the adjoining streetscape in mature neighborhoods.

3.8.1.2. ELIGIBILITY

- a. The Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements to be eligible to apply for the Storefront Improvement Grant:

- i. the building must be an Eligible Property;
 - ii. the applicant must be either the property owner or a tenant with at least three years remaining on the lease from the Application Date;
- b. Individual Units within a Multi-Unit Building will be treated as individual Applicants;
- c. Government buildings/property, residential property without a ground-floor commercial use, churches and other religious institutions will not be eligible.

3.8.1.3. ELIGIBLE ASSISTANCE

- a. Maximum funding allowed under the Storefront Improvement Grant is as follows:
 - i. not to exceed 50% of eligible costs for goods and services; and
 - ii. not to exceed \$15,000 per unit.
- b. Individual units within a Multi-Unit Building may apply independently; however, the total combined funding for all units within the same building shall not exceed \$45,000 within a five-year period regardless of the number of applicants.
- c. Eligible costs include but are not limited to:
 - i. architectural and/or engineering fees;
 - ii. façade improvements, including repainting, refacing, and restoration of masonry, brickwork, stucco, wood, or other siding materials;
 - iii. redesign or reconstruction of storefronts, including window and entranceway replacements that improve appearance and accessibility;
 - iv. replacement or restoration of architectural features such as cornices, eaves, parapets, and canopies;
 - v. installation of exterior lighting and signage as part of a comprehensive storefront upgrade;
 - vi. professional restoration of historic elements;
 - vii. enhancements to rear or side façades that support overall improvement or activate under-utilized areas; and
 - viii. installation of murals on external walls or assets that are highly visible from a public road and/or sidewalk.

- d. Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:
- i. structural repairs, including foundations and roofs, that are unrelated to the storefront or exterior aesthetics;
 - ii. electrical, plumbing, or mechanical work not directly tied to storefront appearance or accessibility improvements;
 - iii. security bars, security systems, and non-architectural fencing;
 - iv. non-permanent items such as furnishings, interior window coverings, tools, equipment, and consumables;
 - v. landscaping, artificial plants, or decorative features that are not permanently affixed;
 - vi. sidewalks, paving, or curb work not directly related to storefront or public-facing improvements;
 - vii. permitting, regulatory, commission, or legal fees;
 - viii. shipping and delivery fees;
 - ix. costs incurred prior to the Application Date;
 - x. routine maintenance, non-specific costs, profit, insurance, warranties, or costs associated with overruns;
 - xi. improvements undertaken solely to comply with Building Code, Fire Code, or Property Standards orders; and
 - xii. projects or expenses intended for personal use or that do not directly support a commercial storefront.
 - xiii. murals that include:
 - A. any form of advertising that is 15% or more of the total mural area;
 - B. a theme that does not align with the City's values, vision, or strategic goals as specified within the City's Strategic Plan.

3.8.2. COMMERCIAL IMPROVEMENT GRANT

3.8.2.1. PURPOSE

- a. The purpose of the Commercial Improvement Grant is to support investment in the interior renovation of commercial units in older buildings within mature neighborhoods. Improvements, whether for occupied, vacant, or under-utilized spaces, are expected to enhance the accessibility, visual appeal, energy efficiency, and functionality of publicly accessible or shared interior areas. The intent is to help retain existing tenants, reduce commercial vacancy, and attract new investment to mature areas.

3.8.2.2. ELIGIBILITY

- a. The Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements to be eligible to apply for the Commercial Improvement Grant:
 - i. the building or unit must meet the definition of an Eligible Property;
 - ii. must be either the property owner or a tenant with at least three years remaining on their lease from the Application Date;
- b. Individual Units within a Multi-Unit Building will be treated as individual Applicants;
- c. Government buildings/property, residential property without any ground-floor commercial use, churches and other religious institutions will not be eligible;
- d. Only areas that serve a commercial or business purpose are eligible. Renovations and expenses for areas with a residential purpose are not eligible; and
- e. The project must enhance the aesthetics or functionality of common-use interior areas, such as entryways, lobbies, waiting rooms, work space or restrooms. The improvements must contribute to the building's overall aesthetics, accessibility, functionality, and community benefit, and positively support the businesses operating within it.

3.8.2.3. ELIGIBLE ASSISTANCE

- a. Maximum funding allowed under the Commercial Improvement Grant is as follows:
 - i. not to exceed 50% of eligible costs for goods and services; and
 - ii. not to exceed \$10,000 per unit.
- b. Individual Units within a Multi-Unit Building may apply independently; however, the total combined funding for all units within the same building shall not exceed \$30,000 within a five-year period regardless of the number of applicants.
- c. Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:
 - i. architectural and/or engineering fees;
 - ii. interior renovations and finishes, such as installation or replacement of drywall, paint, trim, doors, built-in cabinetry, countertops, and other permanent fixtures as part of a broader improvement;
 - iii. mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and energy efficiency upgrades, including HVAC systems, wiring, panels, lighting, fixtures, insulation, insulated windows and doors, and commercial-grade energy-efficient appliances;

- iv. construction or modification of demising walls to support updated layouts or new tenant spaces;
- v. accessibility improvements, such as ramps, widened doorways, and accessible restrooms for individuals with mobility challenges;
- vi. safety upgrades, such as fire suppression systems, emergency lighting, and other improvements required for code compliance.

d. Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:

- i. repairs or restoration to structural foundations that are unrelated to the commercial improvement;
- ii. repairs or restoration to parts of the building unrelated to the approved commercial use areas such as private residential spaces;
- iii. roof repairs or restoration;
- iv. security bars and security systems;
- v. non-permanent items such as furnishings, window coverings, chattels, tools, equipment, and consumables;
- vi. permitting, regulatory, commission, or legal fees;
- vii. routine maintenance, non-specific costs, profit, insurance, warranties, or costs associated with overruns;
- viii. shipping and delivery fees; and
- ix. costs incurred prior to the Application Date.