

	<b>TOWN OF VIRDEN</b>	
	<b>General Policies</b>	
	<b>TITLE:</b>  <b>Storefront Improvement Grant</b>	<small>DATE:</small> <b>May 17<sup>th</sup> 2022</b>  <small>APPROVED by:</small> Council  <small>Revision Date:</small> December 19, 2023
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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this program is to support projects that focus on upgrading business façade improvements. The incentive is a reimbursement program and is paid out upon completion of the project and once all criteria is met. The intention of this program is to assist financially property owners in renovations that will in turn encourage beautification, revitalization and business to stay and grow in our community. While priority will be given to businesses located within our downtown and main corridors, we invite all business within the Town to apply.

**ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

This grant program is intended to assist business owners to contribute to:

- Unique and vibrant business culture within the Town;
- Facilitate the addition of building features that improve the pedestrian experience;
- Encourage the development of areas within the Revitalization Plan;
- Improve safety;
- Improve accessibility;
- Add diversity and interest;
- Encourage retail and business investment;

Visually appealing storefronts can contribute to an economically vibrant business area and has the potential to:

- Provide services and amenities to residents and visitors;
- Contribute significantly to the streetscape and economic vitality;
- Create a welcoming and appealing downtown as a place to shop and live;
- Create attractiveness which complements community pride, revitalization and tourism.

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## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Geographic Eligibility**

Business storefront must be located within the Town of Virden to be eligible. Priority of applications will be given to businesses located within the identified Revitalization Plan areas highlighted green, yellow and purple, as per attached Schedule A.

### **Applicant Eligibility**

- The applicant must be either the business owner or the main floor commercial tenant (this can include a non-profit, cooperative or renter);
- Tenant applicants must obtain the property owner's signed approval for the proposed project;
- Tenant(s) should have a minimum of two years remaining on a lease from the date of application;
- The program is intended to encourage significant improvements to storefronts. Therefore, applications that include multiple activities will be considered a higher priority. (ie, new signage alone may not meet the program objectives);
- Grant funding will not be issued to any eligible applicant who is in arrears of any Town financial obligation or to correct any Building Code, Fire Code or Property Standards orders
- Note that new construction, national franchises, government buildings, residences, churches or other religious institutions are not eligible. An independent owner of a national franchise may be eligible.
- In complex cases, engineered drawings may be required;

### **Eligible Improvements**

Applicants should consider projects that improve the building and street face that enhance pedestrian comfort and promote the business area as an inviting and desirable place to shop, dine, live and invest in.

#### **Eligible Projects:**

- New/Additional Exterior Lighting or Exterior Decorative Lighting;
- Painting;
- Window Replacements;
- Awnings;
- Installation of new signage, including blade signs or improvements to existing signage;
- Façade cleaning and painting (as part of broader works);

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- Accessibility Improvements (excluding ramps);
- Landscape Enhancements, excluding non-permanent fixtures
- Repair/replacement of cornices, parapets, brick or other exterior architectural features;
- Engineering and/or design studies/drawings

**Eligible Expenses:**

- Purchase of materials and supplies;
- Equipment rentals;
- Trade and contractor fees;
- Development and building permits (if required)

**Ineligible Projects:**

- Major building repairs or structural foundations;
- Roof repairs not related to exterior aesthetics;
- Interior improvements or upgrades;
- Electrical upgrades not associated with storefront improvements;
- Security equipment or blinds;
- Personal property or equipment;
- Accessibility ramps;
- Metal clad siding
- Any improvements already improved through Heritage Grant

**CONDITIONS**

1. All projects requiring a development or building permit must apply through the Trans Canada West Planning District;
2. The program will contribute up to 50% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$5,000.00;
3. Program application must be made by registered building owner, or in the case of a tenant, with the written consent of the owner;
4. Submission of applicants are open January 1 to April 30 of each year. All submissions will be reviewed and evaluated after the closing date. All projects must be completed and final report and receipts submitted by June 30 of the following year. All successful applicants will be notified by May 31;
5. Council will review and approve each application based on the eligibility criteria and available funds allocated to the program. Providing all information satisfies Council all

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applications will be considered at the next regular council meeting following the application submission. Council has the right to refuse any application. Projects must be approved before work can commence.

6. Applications that meet eligibility but are rejected due to a shortfall in program funds may apply again in the subsequent calendar year;
7. Applicants may apply in consecutive years. However, the cumulative amount received in any three-year period shall not exceed \$5,000.00;
8. The Town reserves the right to review all completed eligible works to ensure the monetary value of the work completed coincides with the monetary value of the work proposed as indicated on any approved incentive application. Should the Town deem the monetary value of work completed does not coincide with the monetary value of the work proposed, the Town reserves the right to reduce the amount of the incentive accordingly.
9. All approved projects agree to potential publication and marketing of their project by the Town, either through municipal website, social media, news release and/or public event;
10. Council has the right to terminate the Storefront Improvement Grant Program at any time.
11. The Town reserves the right to approve less than the requested amount, based on available funding.
12. Applicants will be notified in writing if their proposed application has been accepted. This letter will outline additional items and conditions of the program, if applicable.
13. Prior to approving the funds dispersal to the applicant for the program, Town or Trans Canada West Planning District staff may inspect the building to review the condition of the façade and the proposed improvements.
14. Upon completion of the eligible works, the applicant must provide the Town with a final report and receipts/invoices for the eligible expenses including proof of payment, have been submitted to the Town;
15. Upon verification that the eligible works are complete, and invoices and proof of payment have been verified to be accurate, the incentive funds shall be issued within thirty (30) days of receipt.
16. All approved applicants will be required to post a decal, provided by the Town of Virden, in the front window of the benefitting property, showing proof of participation in the program, for a minimum of one year following completion of the works.
17. The applicant will be required to provide before and after photographs of that area of the benefitting property, where the works have occurred, with their final report.

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SCHEDULE A

