



NORTHERN
DEVELOPMENT

2026 Business Façade Improvement program

Application & Guidelines



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Program Purpose and Goals

The District of Mackenzie Business Façade Improvement program was created in partnership with the [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#) to support local businesses with renovating, refurbishing, and improving their business exteriors. The program provides businesses an opportunity not only to create a positive impression for people passing through and residing in our community, but also to encourage people to stop, shop, and explore the unique local businesses residing in Mackenzie's commercial core.

The District of Mackenzie is proud to offer this program that will improve the character and physical appearance of retail and commercial buildings in our community. Funding for the District of Mackenzie's Business Façade Improvement program is provided by Northern Development Initiative Fund (NDIT). Thank you NDIT!

The Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program benefit for improving aesthetics of commercial areas.

The District of Mackenzie will provide a maximum of 50% reimbursement grant up to a maximum of \$5,000 per building/tenant to improve the façade of commercial buildings. Each year a building may access the Business Façade Improvement program for new/incremental façade improvements.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1,000.

Application deadline – The first intake deadline is April 15, 2026. After this date, applications will be accepted on a continuous basis until all funding has been allocated.

The Business Façade Improvement program is offered by the District of Mackenzie with funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Eligible Properties

Store-front retail-like Businesses & Not-for-Profit Organizations

Each privately-owned building (businesses) and not-for-profit organizations within the green and blue zones shown on the program area maps in Schedule "A" are fully eligible for the program.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1000.

Home Occupations (Businesses & Industries)

Home-based occupations located within the orange zone shown on the map in Schedule "A" are eligible for wayfinding signage reimbursement grants through this program. These

businesses are eligible for signage grants to cover 50% of the costs of a wayfinding signage, up to a maximum of \$500.

Eligible Applicants

- You 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 occupations which are zoned commercial, have a storefront and are within the program area
- Home occupations without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage only)
- All property taxes, utilities and business licenses pertaining to the property are fully paid and current
- There must be a current, valid business license for the property (unless otherwise exempt)
- There must be no outstanding building permits, stop work orders, or development permit condition requirements outstanding

Ineligible Applicants

- Residential homes located in the commercial area
- Apartment buildings
- Government owned buildings (municipal, provincial or federal; even if they have business tenants)
- Properties outside the specified area (as defined in Eligible Properties)
- Empty buildings or businesses that are not operating (exception if the business is renovating or doing improvements to the building in anticipation of re-opening)

Eligible Façade 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
- Façade painting
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger enhancements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement)
- Awnings

- Signage (permanent on applicant property)
- Wayfinding signage (permanent sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway).
 - Signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any signage bylaws and regulations
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only
- Patio structure – permanent patio structures will be allowed on the condition that they are permanent for at least two full patio seasons (July-August)

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patios, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving
- Fencing
- Interior/internal 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
- Any improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines
- Any patio furniture, patio decorations and patio heating system

Eligible Costs/Expenses

- Direct project labour costs
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to façade 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 façade not visible from the public right of way
- Façade improvement expenses started prior to application approval
- GST

Please contact Rachelle Richman, Economic Development Coordinator at 250-997-3221 or rrichman@districtofmackenzie.ca, to discuss this potential opportunity.

Design Drawings and Project Budget Estimate

Store-front Businesses & Not-for-Profit Organizations

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

1. The 'before' picture(s) and a design drawing (front elevation) clearly showing the proposed improvements to allow the District staff the ability to evaluate the project. Colour schemes or designs that are deemed inappropriate may disqualify an application or require a resubmission.
2. A project budget estimate and or contractors quote for the proposed project clearly delineating costs.

Designs need not be done by a professional architect or designer, but it is strongly encouraged that the business/property owner seek professional help, keeping in mind that grants will be 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 downtown streetscape, even if it is just one building at a time.

Should District staff deem that the proposed project does not have a positive impact on the streetscape, the application may be denied.

Please 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.

Home Occupations (Businesses & Industries)

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

1. 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' and 'after' picture(s) to allow the District staff the ability to evaluate the project).
2. Color schemes, content or designs, along with placement of signage that are deemed inappropriate may disqualify an application or require a resubmission.
3. A project budget estimate and/or quote for the proposed project clearly delineating signage costs.

Application Process

1. Owner/Tenant submits application form (attached as Schedule "B") with all applicable attachments
 - Designs
 - 'Before' pictures, and 'after' building elevation drawings of the façade to be improved
 - Approval letter from owner (if applicable)

For way-finding signage applications, the Owner/Tenant submits application with:

- Signage design
 - 'Before' pictures of area for proposed installation
 - Approval letter from owner (if applicable)
2. Staff reviews application and proposed façade or signage improvements to ensure that improvements meet the façade improvement program guidelines.
 3. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate accepts or rejects the preliminary applications. The District Council reviews the qualified applications and issues final approvals.

4. Approval or rejection of applications 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 Tenant/Owner and the Chief Administrative Officer or designate.
6. Owner/Tenant obtains any required permits and completes renovations.
 - The District of Mackenzie will require a building permit for structural improvements prior to construction.
7. Owner/Tenant **must** provide verification of expenditures with the following:
 - **All copies** of invoices and receipts (The District cannot pay for expenditures without proper verification)
 - Copies of cleared check/bank statements/credit card statements confirming payments
 - Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable).
 - Business testimonial
 - Pictures of the completed façade improvement or signage installation.
8. District staff verifies 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.

Submitting an application 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 Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.

Approval Timeline

Please allow one (1) month for application review and approval announcements after the April 15, deadline.

Please note: Applications must be submitted and approved by the District **PRIOR** to the onset of the façade improvement project in order to be eligible to receive funding.

If approved and once accepted, the Tenant/Owner has until December 1, 2026 to complete the project as indicated on the signed letter of understanding.

After evaluating all received applications, **if the program is not fully subscribed, further applications will be received on an on-going basis.** Decisions will be made no later than one (1) month after it is received.

Project Review Committee/Selection Process

The CAO will review all applications, determine eligibility of projects and make recommendations to the Council about which projects should be funded. District Staff will be responsible to confirm the expenditures and that the project has been completed according to the approved plans.

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) Provide additional information in order to seek reversal of the decision to decline the application.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the program or application process, please contact:

Rachelle Richman

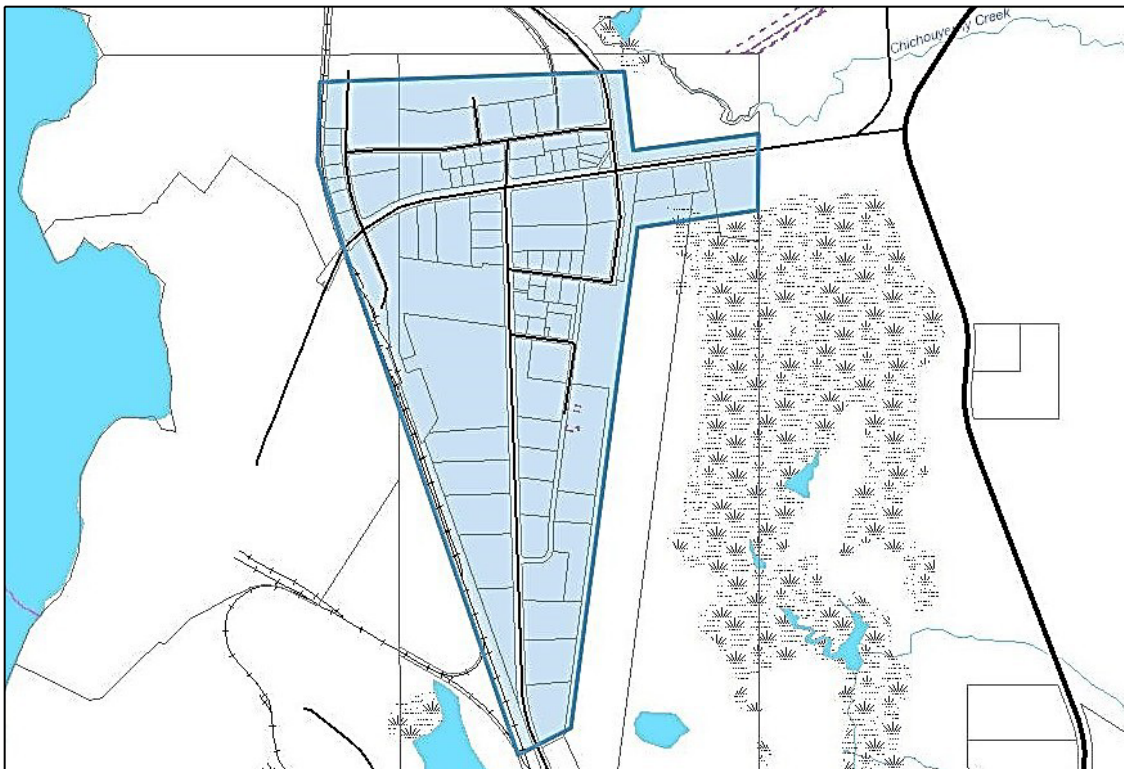
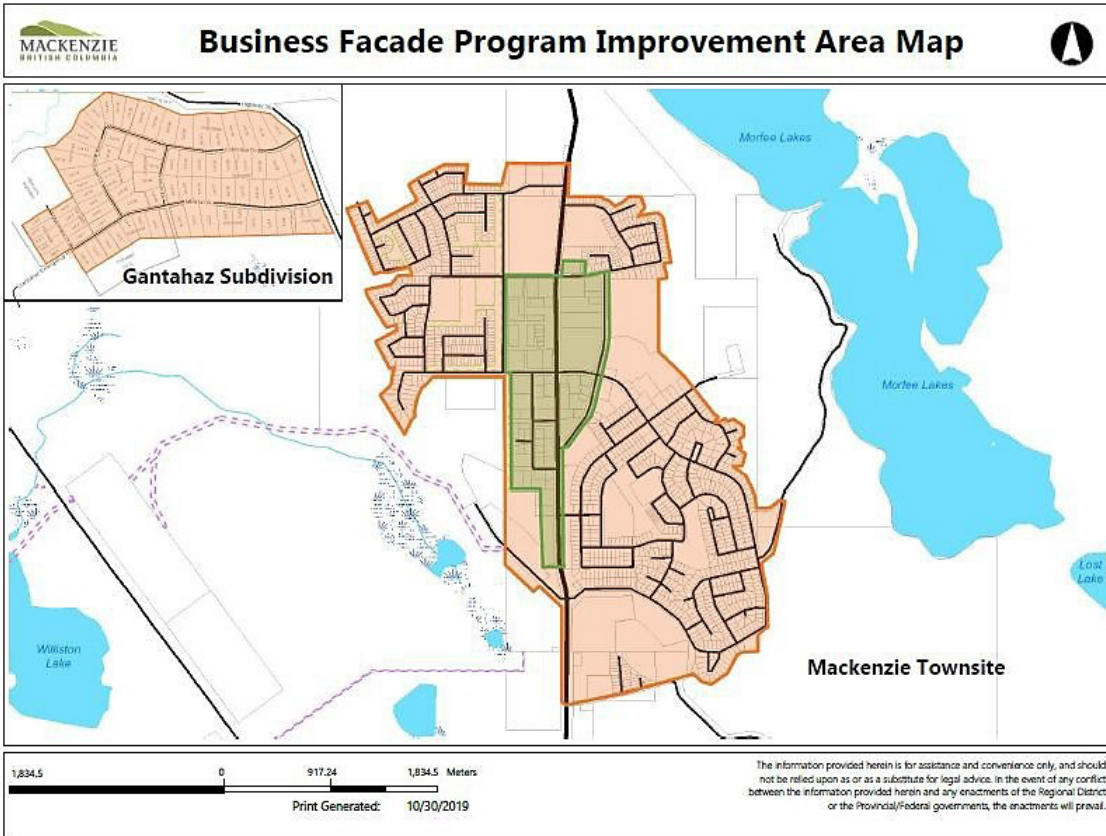
Economic Development

Coordinator

250-997-3221

rrichman@districtofmackenzie.ca

**Schedule “A”
Program Area
Maps**



Schedule “B” Application Form



Mackenzie Business Façade Improvement Program: Grant Application

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone #: _____

Building Address: _____

Email: _____

If you are applying as the tenant of a building please provide the following information and attach a letter of consent from the owners stating that you are allowed to make these changes to the building.

Owner's Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone #: _____

Project Description

1. **Describe the proposed project: (attach any extra sheets, photos, designs, samples, etc.)**

2. **Proposed Start Date:** _____

3. **Planned Completion Date:** _____

4. **Estimated Total Project Cost:** _____



Mackenzie Business Façade Improvement Program: Grant Application

Budget

Project Cost Components (Estimates):

	Labour	Materials
Design	\$	\$
Mechanical	\$	\$
Electrical	\$	\$
Structural	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$

Checklist & Attachments

Applicant Checklist:

- ☐ Property Taxes Paid
- ☐ Utility Taxes Paid
- ☐ Licence Fees Paid
- ☐ Required Permit Applications Completed
- ☐ Building Owner Authorization

Attach to Application:

- ☐ Drawings
- ☐ Material and Colour Samples
- ☐ Photos of Existing Conditions
- ☐ Detailed Specifications and Associated Costs
- ☐ Cost Estimates from Contractors

For Office Use

Date Received: _____

Received By: _____ Signature: _____



Mackenzie Business Façade Improvement Program: Grant Application

Terms and Conditions

I, _____, of _____ have read the complete
(Applicant) (Business/Building)
application and guidelines package and concur with and give my consent to the work proposed in the
application.

I assume all responsibility for obtaining appropriate architectural drawing, building permits and inspections,
and hiring of contractors as necessary.

I agree not to involve the District of Mackenzie or the Business Façade Improvement Program Sponsor in any
legal action between myself and any contractors, estimators, employees, workers or agents arising from or out
of the façade improvement project.

I give my consent to the District to make all inspections necessary to confirm that the approved plans are
implemented in accordance with expected standards.

I agree to allow the District of Mackenzie to use before and after photos of the project for the purpose of
promoting the program.

Payment of approved grants will be made upon the applicant providing the Project Review Committee proof of
final completion of the proposed improvements along with verification of expenditures and proof of final
inspection (when required).

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Application received by: _____ Date: _____