

**COMMERCIAL BUILDING FACADE GRANT  
PROGRAM GUIDE**

(Last revised July 30, 2012)

**1) Program Description**

To provide a financial incentive in the form of a grant to promote the rehabilitation, restoration and improvement of the front, rear and side facades where visible of commercial, institutional and mixed use<sup>1</sup> buildings in the Downtown Smithville Community Improvement Project Area.

**2) Who can apply?**

Only owners of properties (and tenants with written authorization from owners) within the Downtown Smithville Community Improvement Project Area as shown in Schedule A attached to this application that meet the program eligibility requirements may apply. If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application.

The Township retains the right and absolute discretion to reject an application received from a person or corporation which in the opinion of the Township or its professional advisers, does not possess the experience, financial, technical, personnel or other resources that may be required to carry out the obligations that the applicant proposes to assume under the terms of its application and grant agreement.

**3) How does the program work?**

The program is structured as a matching grant where the Township will provide a grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible facade and storefront improvement and restoration works, up to a maximum grant per property/project of \$10,000. This matching grant can be increased by up to \$7,500 at the discretion of Council for properties:

- a) that also require side and/or rear facade improvement and restoration works where said rear and/or side facades are highly visible; or,
- b) designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

**4) What types of work are eligible for a grant?**

The following types of facade rehabilitation, restoration and improvement works on commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings are considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- i) repair or replacement of storefront, including repair or replacement of storefront doors and windows;
- ii) repair or repointing of facade masonry and brickwork;

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<sup>1</sup> Mixed use includes commercial/residential, commercial/institutional and other mixed uses containing commercial use.

- iii) repair or replacement of cornices, parapets, eaves and other architectural details;
- iv) repair or replacement of awnings or canopies;
- v) facade painting and cleaning/treatments;
- vi) upgrading/addition of new exterior lighting fixtures on the façade, and lighting fixtures in the entrance and storefront display areas;
- vii) installation/improvement of signage (as permitted by the sign by-law);
- viii) landscaping, including plant materials (to a maximum 25% of the approved grant amount);
- ix) architectural/professional design fees required for eligible works (to a maximum of 10% of the approved grant amount); and
- x) other similar repairs/improvements as may be approved.

In addition to the eligible costs specified in above, the following types of building maintenance and improvement works on commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* are also considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- i) works that conserve or enhance elements specified in the Reasons for Designation accompanying the designating by-law under the *Ontario Heritage Act*;
- ii) fences and outbuildings if specifically referred to in the Reasons for Designation;
- iii) original siding and roofing materials including repair and replacement where necessary of wood clapboard or board-and-batten, repair and repointing of masonry buildings, stucco repair, repair or replacement of original roofing materials (slate, wood shingles, tile, etc.);
- iv) removal of modern material (e.g., asphalt shingles,) and replacement with documented original materials;
- v) reconstruction or construction of former and significant architectural features for which the appearance can be clearly determined from documentary sources (photographs, drawings, etc.);
- vi) cleaning of masonry buildings if it is necessary for the building's preservation;
- vii) all final finishes, such as paint and masonry are eligible for funding subject to approval;
- viii) interior works specifically referred to in the Reasons for Designation, including, but not limited to: woodwork, plasterwork, wall or ceiling murals, or metal work, and other decorative features; and,
- ix) works required to maintain or preserve significant architectural features.

For buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the facade restoration and improvement works should be supported by documentation in the form of historic photographs or drawings clearly showing the feature(s) to be restored or reconstructed. Eligible works will be guided by any municipally issued urban design guidelines, as amended from time to time, and appropriate reference material as determined by Township staff.

### **5) What conditions must be met to be eligible for a grant?**

In addition to the General Program Requirements, the following program specific requirements must also be met:

- Applications must be made in writing (see attached for Application Form);

- The property shall be improved such that the improvement does not compromise the reasons for heritage designation or pre-existing or existing heritage features;
- The applicant will be required to submit at least three cost estimates from bona fide contractors for the facade improvements to be completed; (Note: this is not required for grant approval must be submitted and approved prior to the building permit);
- The applicant will be required to submit professional architectural/design drawings which shall be in conformity with the Township's urban design guidelines, heritage design guidelines, facade design guidelines and sign by-laws;
- The applicant may be required to submit other supporting documents as specified by the Township (see required documents checklist); and,
- Must provide to the Township before and after before and after photos of the building
- Construction of all proposed improvements is to be completed within one (1) calendar year of the date of the approval of the grant. If the work is not completed within one (1) year, the grant approval will cease and the grant will not be paid (unless an extension has been granted by Township Council).

**6) Is there a fee to apply?**

No.

**7) When will the grant funds be advanced?**

The grant will be advanced in full when:

- a Grant Agreement has been signed and executed;
- construction is complete;
- the building has been inspected by municipal staff;
- the applicant provides proof that all contractors have been paid; and
- before and after photographs of building(s).

**8) What are the default provisions?**

The default provisions are contained in the Grant Agreement. Payment of the grant may be cancelled if:

- property taxes are more than three (3) payments in arrears;
- the building is demolished or any of the heritage features are altered in any way that would compromise the reason for designation;
- the applicant declares bankruptcy;
- the applicant uses the grant for improvement of works that are not eligible for this program;
- the applicant fails to maintain the improvements as required in the Grant Agreement; and,
- the applicant is in default of any of the provisions of the Grant Agreement.

**9) How do I apply for a grant?**

- a) Arrange a pre-application meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, project timing, etc...

- b) If authorized to apply for a grant, complete and submit an application form and ensure that your application includes all of the information requested in the application form and the required documents checklist.

### **10) What happens next?**

- Applications and supporting documentation are reviewed by staff to ensure that they meet all of the eligibility requirements. If your application does not meet the eligibility requirements, you will be notified of this in writing.
- Staff may request clarification or additional supporting documentation.
- Staff will perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the property (if necessary).
- A recommendation on the grant application is made by staff and forwarded to Township Council, along with a Grant Agreement signed by the applicant.
- If your application is approved by Council, the Grant Agreement is then executed by the Township. A copy of the executed agreement(s) is then returned to you for your records.
- Construction of the approved works may now commence, subject to issuance of a building permit(s).
- Contact Township staff toward work completion.
- Upon completion of the works, staff will conduct a final site visit(s) and inspection(s) (as necessary) to ensure compliance with the Grant Agreement and any permits pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- Submit to the Township, copies of paid invoices and “after” picture(s) of the completed works.
- Upon review and approval of all submitted documentation, the Township will issue a grant cheque to the applicant for the full amount of the approved funding.

***For further information on this program, please contact Brian Treble, Director of Planning and Building, at (905) 905-3346 extension 5138 or via e-mail at [btreble@westlincoln.ca](mailto:btreble@westlincoln.ca).***