



Village of McBride Business Façade Improvement Program Guide



2026

In partnership with Northern Development Initiative Trust

Village of McBride Business Façade Improvement Program Guide

Program Purpose and Goals

An attractive and inviting business district encourages civic pride and is welcoming to locals, visitors and investors alike. The McBride Business Façade Improvement Program provides grants to business owners and non-profit tenants to renovate, restore or redesign retail and commercial building façades and storefronts located on commercially zoned properties within the municipality. Business façade upgrades create a more interesting and appealing physical environment – attracting customers, clients, visitors and businesses to our commercial district.

The Business Façade Improvement Program is offered by the Village of McBride with funding provided by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

GOALS - The Village of McBride is confident that this initiative will contribute to:

- Making McBride a more inviting and interesting place to live, eat, shop, work and visit;
- Attracting customers, clients, visitors, businesses and investors to McBride;
- Promoting the marketability of retail and commercial businesses;
- Helping building owners to attract and retain tenants; and
- Building civic pride among the business community and citizens.

Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program benefit for improving aesthetics of commercial areas. The McBride Business Façade Improvement Program assists business owners and non-profit tenants with the financial costs of improving the physical appearance of their commercial/retail buildings.

The Village of McBride will provide a matching dollar-per-dollar reimbursement grant of up to 50% of allowable eligible costs up to a maximum of \$5,000 per project.

There is no longer a lifetime maximum for eligible façade improvements. Each year, a building may access the Business Façade Improvement Program for new/incremental eligible façade improvements to an **annual grant maximum of \$5,000**.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$2,000.

Applications will be received and approved on a first-come, first-served basis until all grant funding has been awarded. New applicants (building has not previously seen façade improvement through this program) will be prioritized.

The application deadline is July 31, 2026, subject to change.

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Eligibility

Eligible Properties:

Eligible businesses for the 2026 Façade program are all properties zoned **commercial** located within the Village of McBride municipal boundaries. See below and Schedule “B” to Zoning Bylaw 703 in the Village of McBride – Commercial Zones **C1-C5** (Appendix B attached – McBride Zoning Map).



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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-profits organizations (tenants) occupying commercial storefronts
- Home based businesses which are zoned commercial, have a storefront and are within the specified area
- Home-based businesses without a commercial storefront (eligible for wayfinding signage* only)
- Property taxes pertaining to the property are fully paid and current;
- Current, valid business licenses for the property (unless otherwise exempt);
- 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 (proposed improvements must be new to the building)

*Way-finding signs for home-based businesses are eligible for 50% funding to a maximum of \$500 and must adhere to any municipal signage bylaws and regulations.

Eligible Façade Improvements:

- Exterior lighting (new but not replacement)
- Exterior architectural features
- Awnings
- Exterior surfaces and details (decorative details, moldings, trims, etc.)
- Windows (only if part of larger improvements, no stand-alone window replacement)
- New siding
- Façade painting (including murals)
- Entrances and doorways (only if part of larger improvements, no stand-alone entrance/doorway replacement)
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors, etc.) to the outside of the building only
- Signage (permanent on applicant property)
- Home-business way-finding signage (*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 municipal signage bylaws and regulations.
- Patios (on a case-by-case basis – contact the Village office)

Eligible Costs/Expenses:

- Direct project labour costs and/or Contractor fees
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to façade only)
- Rental of tools and equipment
- Project related materials and supplies
- Shipping and/or freight
- PST

Ineligibility

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)

Ineligible Façade Improvements:

- Routine maintenance
- Structural repairs
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, 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
- Improvements that have been started prior to application approval
- Improvements deemed inconsistent with redevelopment purposes and design guidelines

Ineligible costs/expenses:

- Staff wages and/or benefits
- Purchase of construction tools or equipment
- Expenses related to improvement to the building façade not visible from the public right of way
- Operational costs including utilities (hydro, gas, etc.)
- Duties
- Permit fees
- Façade improvements expenses started prior to application approval
- GST

Design Guidelines

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

Projects are required to reflect principles of good design. The renovated façade of the building should be well integrated, interesting and architecturally in unison with the style of the whole building. Where a subject building facing two streets, a project should address both streets and should be well detailed for any pedestrian activity. Important building corners should avoid placement of staircases or other non-active functions like storage, mechanical or electrical rooms.

Applicants located within the Development Permit Area (designated MC - Main Street Commercial), should review and address the criteria outlined in the Development Permit Guidelines of the Village of McBride Official Community Plan – A “Town on Track” (Bylaw 682) (see Appendix A attached or visit our website www.mcbride.ca under Bylaws). As far as possible, projects should take into consideration the guidelines for awnings, signs, lighting, building materials, green building design, building colours and general form and character, as set out in the Development Permit Guidelines. **Applicants located within the Development Permit Area are required to submit a completed Development Permit Application along with their Business Façade Application.**

Franchise-type businesses within the Development Permit Area are exempt from following the “Town on Track” colour palette. Wherever possible, franchises in the area are encouraged to follow railway style heritage design.

Designs need not be done by a professional architect or designer, but applicants are strongly encouraged to seek professional design advice, keeping in mind that the 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 the businesses in our community, even if it is just one building at a time. Should Village staff deem that the proposed project does not have a positive impact to the streetscape, the application may be denied.

Building, sign and/or other permits may be required based on the extent of the improvements to be completed. These requirements are not waived upon approval of a Business Façade Improvement Program grant and should be applied for prior to or concurrently with an application for this program.

Application Process

Generally, the application, approval and reimbursement processes are as follows:

1. Applicant contacts the McBride Village Office to determine if the building qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program, to discuss the propose project, and obtain a Program Guide and Application package. **McBride Village office – 250-569-2229.**
2. Applicant submits a completed Business Façade Improvement Program Application form with all the required attachments to the Village Office or by email to **edo@mcbride.ca**:
 - 'Before' pictures;
 - A design drawing showing the 'after' improvements;
 - Or a design drawing/electronic copy of signage;
 - A Letter of Consent from the owners (if applicable) authorizing you to apply to the program and for you to make the façade changes outlined in your application;
 - Terms and Conditions Agreement signed;
 - Development Permit Application (if applicable); and,
 - A project budget estimate.
3. Village staff reviews the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that the improvements meet the McBride Business Façade Improvement Program eligibility criteria (and Development Permit Area requirements, if applicable) and makes recommendations for acceptance or rejection to Village Council.
4. Applicant will be advised in writing as to whether the application has been approved, refused or approved with conditions.
5. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is forwarded to the applicant. It must be signed by the applicant and a representative from the Village prior to start of the project.
6. Applicant acquires any required permits and completes the renovation.
7. Applicant provides verification of expenditures along with the following before November 16, 2026, in order to be reimbursed:
 - Copies of all invoices or receipts, including proof of payment;
 - Summary of all costs itemized and invoice (on your company's letterhead) made out to the Village of McBride in the amount of the approved grant;
 - Certificate of completion signed by the applicant or the contractor indicating that all work described in the Letter of Understanding has been completed and paid in full;
 - Proof that the improvements have passed final inspection (if applicable);
 - "After" pictures of the completed façade improvement or signage; and,
 - Testimonial from applicant.
8. Staff verifies that the façade improvements or new signage meet the terms as stated in the Letter of Understanding.
9. Upon approval, applicant is issued a cheque.

Note: The Village cannot pay for expenditures without proper verification.

Evaluation/Selection Process

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. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served bases and awarded based on merit and visual impact.

Considerations in the evaluation, ranking and selection process include:

- Does the project for which the funds are being sought meet the applicable Design Guidelines?
- Will the project, once complete, have a noticeable impact on the streetscape?
- Will the renovation offer a noticeable improvement to the streetscape?
- Was a professional designer or architect used?

Evaluation of projects will be based on the following criteria:

- The project reflects principles of good design.
- The project is well integrated, interesting and architecturally in unison with the style of the whole building.
- The project conforms with McBride’s “Town on Track” colour palette and design character (unless exempt) as defined in the Development Permit Guidelines of the Village of McBride Official Community Plan – A “Town on Track” (Bylaw 682) (see Appendix A attached).
- The project, once complete, will have a noticeably positive impact on the streetscape.

Village Office staff will review all applications, determine eligibility of projects and make recommendations to Council about which projects should be funded. Village Council will have the final say regarding approval of all projects under this program. Village staff will confirm the expenditures and ensure that the project has been completed according to the approved plans prior to grant reimbursement.

Please Note:

- All applications will be considered in the order they are received.
- Applications must be submitted and approved by the Village PRIOR to the onset of the façade improvement project in order to be eligible to receive funding.
- In the event that an application is declined, the project proponent may request a meeting to discuss the application with the purpose of seeking input on the proposal in order to modify the application and meet the program guidelines.
- Applicant is responsible for securing all necessary permits relating to façade renovation.
- To access 2026 funding, projects must be completed and invoiced to the Village Office by no later than **November 16, 2026**. Extensions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- All applicable municipal bylaws must be followed in the design and renovation to the building façade and signage.
- Submitting an application does not guarantee a grant, or a specific grant amount.