

COUNCIL POLICY



Document Name: Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program
Department Name: Planning and Development
Document Number: FIN-320
Effective Date: June 29, 2020 Next Revision Date: December 31, 2020

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

Strategic Priority 2 – Downtown Revitalization
Strategic Priority 3 – Regional Economic Development

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Establish the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program (“the Program”);
2. Outline the value of the Grants; and
3. Determine eligibility for Grants under the Policy.

The Program will provide a financial incentive to eligible property and business owners within the Downtown (Schedule A). The objectives of the Program are:

1. To retain existing businesses, while encouraging new businesses in the Downtown;
2. To introduce new features and amenities that create interest and vibrancy, helping transform the Downtown into a place people want to spend time; and
3. To enhance the aesthetic qualities of private property within the Downtown.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Definitions:

- 1.1. “Agreement” means the agreement between the Recipient and the Municipality that sets out the terms and conditions for participating in the Program. The Agreement must be signed by the Recipient before any Grant-related works begin.
- 1.2. “Applicant” means a property owner, a property owner’s representative or tenant (with property owner permission) who submits an Application.
- 1.3. “Beautification” means the process of making visual improvements to the exterior of a building or its frontage to enhance its appearance and appeal through the following, including but not limited to, the use of planters, landscaping, seasonal

window displays and amenities such as bicycle racks and benches, for use by the general public.

- 1.4. “CIP Branch” means the Community Investment Program Branch of the Community Services Department, which is responsible for the financial administration of the Program.
- 1.5. “Commercial” means a building intended to accommodate the buying or selling of goods and services. Commercial developments include establishments used for the purposes of offices, retail stores, personal services, business services, food and beverage, and entertainment such as theatres, cinemas and casinos.
- 1.6. “Downtown” means the area identified in Schedule A.
- 1.7. “Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program” (“the Program”) means a short-term grant program for businesses in Fort McMurray’s Downtown. The Program is intended to encourage and support the Downtown’s revitalization.
- 1.8. “Facade” means the face of a building that fronts onto the Public Road.
- 1.9. “Grant” means a transfer of monies from the Municipality to a Recipient for a project or purpose according to the requirements outlined in the Administrative Procedure.
- 1.10. “Institutional” means a building developed to serve a community’s social, educational, health, cultural, faith and recreational needs.
- 1.11. “Mixed-use” means a building with Commercial uses at-grade and Residential uses above.
- 1.12. “Municipality” means the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
- 1.13. “Mural” means any painting, mosaic or graphic art which is applied professionally to all or a portion of an exterior wall of a building for the purposes of decoration or artistic expression, and which depict a scene or event of natural, social, cultural or historic significance.
- 1.14. “On-Street Patio” means a Patio located on a Public Road, which may replace one or more on-street parking spaces.
- 1.15. “Patio” means an open or partially covered seating area with tables, which is an extension of a restaurant, café, bar, pub, specialty food service or similar business.
- 1.16. “Professional Artist”
 - 1.16.1. has specialized training in the artistic field (not necessarily in academic institutions but can include mentorships, self-study, academic training or combinations of these types of training);
 - 1.16.2. is recognized as a professional by their peers or by their community as an artist of achievement or potential;
 - 1.16.3. receives compensation and/or recognition in a manner consistent with the standards of their practice, community or Indigenous protocols;
 - 1.16.4. is committed to devoting more time to artistic activity, if possible - financially; and

1.16.5. has a history of public presentation or publication (exhibition, sales).

- 1.17.** “Program” means the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program.
- 1.18.** “Program Guidelines” means a document or documents that provides a detailed explanation of the Program to guide Applicants through the Application process. The Program Guidelines provide an overview of the Program and Grants, and sets out eligibility, Application and assessment processes, and design standards, where applicable.
- 1.19.** “Property” means a lot or parcel of land together with all the building structures located thereon.
- 1.20.** “Public Road” means the right-of-way for a primary highway, secondary highway, street or lane that is registered at Land Titles and is used or intended to be used to accommodate vehicle traffic.
- 1.21.** “Recipient” means an Applicant that is approved by the Municipality to receive a Grant.
- 1.22.** “Residential” means a building that is regularly used by its occupants as a permanent place of abode, which is made one’s home as opposed to one’s place of business, and which has housekeeping and cooking facilities for its occupants only.
- 1.23.** “Restricted Commercial” means a Commercial use that may involve alcohol, nudity or gambling. Restricted Commercial includes, but is not limited to, adult entertainment facilities, casinos, cannabis retail stores, drinking lounges and nightclubs.
- 1.24.** “Sidewalk Patio” means a Patio that is located on a sidewalk.
- 1.25.** “Storefront” means the front of a Commercial business.
- 1.26.** “Temporary Boardwalk” means a platform structure that provides an alternative pedestrian walkway, required where a Patio occupies the width of the sidewalk.

2. Responsibilities:

2.1. Council:

- 2.1.1. Approve this Policy.
- 2.1.2. Approve any amendments to this Policy.
- 2.1.3. Approve the Grant allocations.

2.2. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):

- 2.2.1. Recommend any amendments to this Policy.
- 2.2.2. Support the implementation of this Policy.
- 2.2.3. Review and support any amendments to the Program.

3. General Procedures:

3.1. Program Area:

- 3.1.1. The Program applies to eligible Applicants and building types in the Downtown, as outlined in Schedule A.

3.2. Program Duration:

- 3.2.1. The Municipality will accept complete Applications from June 29, 2020 until December 31, 2020.
- 3.2.2. Funding is provided on a first-come, first-served basis, for successful Recipients, until the budget for the Program has been exhausted.

3.3. Grants and Their Allocations:

- 3.3.1. The Program provides the following grants:
 - 3.3.1.1. Façade Improvement Grant;
 - 3.3.1.2. Interior Improvements Grant;
 - 3.3.1.3. Patio Grant; and
 - 3.3.1.4. Beautification Projects and Murals Grant.
- 3.3.2. Funding will be provided in the form of a 50% matching reimbursement Grant whereby funds are paid to Recipients upon the successful completion of their project, and confirmation by the Municipality.
 - 3.3.2.1. The Municipality reserves the right to reimburse 50% or the balance of project costs, whichever is less, where Applicants have received insurance proceeds, provincial disaster recovery assistance or similar recovery funding for a portion of their improvement project(s).
- 3.3.3. Each building is eligible to receive improvements under all four (4) grants.
- 3.3.4. Separate applications are required for each grant type.
- 3.3.5. The funding amounts described in this Policy apply to the entire building, including buildings with multiple units or civic addresses.
- 3.3.6. In buildings with multiple units, Applications may be submitted for more than one unit, until the Grant funding allocated to the entire building has been exhausted.
- 3.3.7. In the case of attached buildings, or where the margins of a building are not self-evident, the Municipality reserves the right to determine what constitutes a 'building' for the purpose of Program eligibility.

3.4. Municipal Control:

- 3.4.1. The Municipality may close the Program to new Applications at any time without notice.

- 3.4.2. The Municipality may terminate the Program at any time without notice.
- 3.4.3. The Municipality reserves the right to determine Applicant participation in the Program on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.4.4. Recipients are bound by the terms and conditions of any Agreements.

3.5. General Eligibility Criteria:

- 3.5.1. The Recipient must be the property owner(s), a property owner's legal representative or a tenant with written permission from the property owner(s).
- 3.5.2. Eligible and ineligible building and Property types are described under the individual Grants outlined in this Policy.
- 3.5.3. The Program is not intended to replace personal insurance or provincial disaster recovery assistance, or cover losses or damages caused by the 2020 spring flood. Where buildings have been damaged by the 2020 spring flood:
 - 3.5.3.1. Applicants must demonstrate that projects constitute an improvement from pre-flood conditions;
 - 3.5.3.2. Applicants shall not submit an Application for improvements they know will be, or likely be, recovered entirely by personal insurance proceeds, provincial disaster recovery assistance or similar recovery funding; and
 - 3.5.3.3. Applicants shall advise the Municipality if they receive personal insurance proceeds, provincial disaster recovery assistance or similar recovery funding that would render the grant redundant.
- 3.5.4. Projects must meet the intent of the Program Guidelines.
- 3.5.5. The following are ineligible:
 - 3.5.5.1. Residential buildings and properties;
 - 3.5.5.2. Home occupations and home businesses;
 - 3.5.5.3. Government-owned buildings (municipal, provincial or federal), except for ground floor units occupied by Commercial tenants.
 - 3.5.5.4. Projects that include window treatments that obscure street-level windows, including tinted or frosted windows, mirrored windows, vinyl wraps, security bars or rolling shutters. Exceptions may be made for Restricted Commercial uses.
 - 3.5.5.5. Projects or work solely intended to restore or remediate losses or damages caused by the 2020 spring flood and/or return buildings to pre-flood conditions.
- 3.5.6. The following must be satisfied and will be verified by the Municipality at the time the Recipients request reimbursement:
 - 3.5.6.1. Property taxes must be current and paid;

- 3.5.6.2. Utility bills must be current and paid;
 - 3.5.6.3. Properties must not have an unresolved order to comply with the Land Use Bylaw, Building Code, Fire Code, Nuisance Bylaw or other regulation; and
 - 3.5.6.4. The Applicant is not a party to a legal dispute with the Municipality.
- 3.5.7. Additional criteria specified under the individual Grants in sections 4, 5, 6 and 7.

3.6. Application Requirements:

- 3.6.1. The Municipality shall accept only complete Applications.
- 3.6.2. Complete Applications shall contain the following:
 - 3.6.2.1. Completed Application form;
 - 3.6.2.2. Project description, including project scope and proposed improvements, construction timelines, project duration (i.e., for seasonal or temporary projects, if applicable) and how the objectives of the Program will be met;
 - 3.6.2.3. Photographs of the existing conditions of the building.
 - a. In the case of properties impacted by the flood, 'before' photographs (i.e., prior to April 26, 2020) and 'after' photographs. Where 'before' photographs are unavailable, the Municipality may accept prior approved building plans at its discretion;
 - 3.6.2.4. Certificate of Title;
 - 3.6.2.5. Letter of Authorization (if Applicant is not the property owner);
 - 3.6.2.6. Grant-specific information described in sections 3.6.4 to 3.6.8; and
 - 3.6.2.7. Any other information required by the Municipality to evaluate the Application.
- 3.6.3. Applicants may be required to provide proof of insurance. Proof of insurance shall be provided for the following projects, or as required by the Municipality:
 - 3.6.3.1. A minimum of two (2) million dollars (\$2,000,000) for Sidewalk Patios that do not require a Temporary Boardwalk.
 - 3.6.3.2. A minimum of five (5) million dollars (\$5,000,000) for On-Street Patios and/or Sidewalk Patios that require a Temporary Boardwalk.
 - 3.6.3.3. A minimum of two (2) million dollars (\$2,000,000) for Façade improvements (i.e., awnings, canopies, signs) on or above a sidewalk.

- 3.6.3.4. Insurance policies shall name the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo as an “additional insured.”
- 3.6.3.5. Recipients are responsible for maintaining insurance coverage for the lifespan of their projects.
- 3.6.3.6. Recipients must submit proof of insurance at the time they enter into an Agreement with the Municipality.
- 3.6.4. Additional Documentation – Façade Improvement Grant:
 - 3.6.4.1. Professionally prepared drawings of the Façade design that show the proposed colours, materials and product specifications; and
 - 3.6.4.2. Two (2) detailed contractor estimates provided by different contractors. The Municipality reserves the right to request additional quotes.
- 3.6.5. Additional Documentation – Interior Improvements Grant:
 - 3.6.5.1. Building plans that show the existing and proposed uses, existing and proposed layouts, dimensions, rooms, entrances/exits and upgrades to building systems:
 - a. In the case of properties impacted by the flood, plans shall show the building as it existed prior to April 26, 2020; and
 - 3.6.5.2. Two (2) detailed contractor estimates provided by different contractors. The Municipality reserves the right to request additional quotes.
- 3.6.6. Additional Documentation – Patio Grant:
 - 3.6.6.1. Site plan that shows the proposed Patio layout including dimensions, seating areas, fencing/screening, entrances/exits, pedestrian circulation and relation to existing buildings, property lines, sidewalks and Public Roads;
 - 3.6.6.2. Clearance Letter from the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Alberta; and
 - 3.6.6.3. Two (2) detailed contractor estimates provided by different contractors for projects that include the construction of new structures (e.g., decks, Temporary Boardwalks). Alternatively, Recipients who directly purchase materials and supplies for their projects may submit a budget with product information and pricing in lieu of contractor estimates.
- 3.6.7. Additional Documentation – Beautification Projects:
 - 3.6.7.1. Site plan that shows the proposed Beautification features and their dimensions in relation to existing buildings, property lines public sidewalks and Public Roads; and
 - 3.6.7.2. Two (2) detailed contractor estimates provided by different

contractors. Alternatively, Recipients who directly purchase materials and supplies for their projects may submit a budget with product information and pricing in lieu of contractor estimates.

3.6.8. Additional Documentation – Murals:

- 3.6.8.1. Letter of intent that describes the proposed design, dimensions, location and surrounding context;
- 3.6.8.2. Proposed design, including preliminary images or coloured renderings prepared by a Professional Artist;
- 3.6.8.3. Curriculum vitae and/or portfolio that details the Professional Artist's experience and prior projects;
- 3.6.8.4. Technical plan that includes the timeline for Mural installation, machinery/equipment required and safety provisions; and
- 3.6.8.5. Project budget that includes a breakdown of the artist's design, labour and studio fees, transportation and accommodation, shipping costs, installation costs, materials and graffiti-resistant coating.

3.7. Construction and Timelines:

- 3.7.1. Construction shall not begin until the Agreement is signed by the Applicant and municipal permits are obtained.
- 3.7.2. Contractors shall be licensed by the Province of Alberta, have a valid municipal business license and carry the required insurance.
- 3.7.3. Recipients may use the contractor of their choice. However, where contractor estimates are required, the lower of the estimates and/or final invoice will be reimbursed.
- 3.7.4. Recipients shall obtain all necessary municipal permits and permissions, including but not limited to, municipal business licenses, development permits, building permits, occupancy certificates, street occupancy permits and licenses of occupation.
- 3.7.5. Application acceptance by the Municipality does not guarantee that the project will receive municipal approvals at the construction stage.
- 3.7.6. The Municipality will encourage Applicants to participate in a pre-Application meeting to clarify requirements prior to applying.
- 3.7.7. Recipients shall notify the Municipality if the project scope or design changes during the permitting or construction process. The Municipality may require the Recipient to enter into an amended Agreement.
- 3.7.8. Projects shall be completed in a timely manner and are subject to the following timelines:
 - 3.7.8.1. Recipients shall begin construction within three (3) months from

- the time they submit a signed Agreement;
 - 3.7.8.2. Recipients shall complete construction within six (6) months from the time they submit a signed Agreement; and
 - 3.7.8.3. Recipients shall install seasonal landscaping Beautification projects within three (3) weeks from the time they submit a signed Agreement.
- 3.7.9. The Municipality may consider extensions to these deadlines if Recipients demonstrate that delays are due to circumstances beyond their control and/or seasonal construction limitations. Recipient shall submit requests for extensions prior to the deadline.

4. Façade Improvement Grant:

4.1. Grant Value:

- 4.1.1. The Municipality will provide a 50% matching Grant, to a maximum of:
 - 4.1.1.1. \$75,000 per building for mid-block buildings; or
 - 4.1.1.2. \$100,000 per building for corner buildings; and
 - 4.1.1.3. Where two (2) or more different Recipients with abutting buildings demonstrate that they have worked together to submit a coordinated Façade improvement design, they may be eligible for an additional bonus of five (5) percent of total project costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 per Recipient, at the discretion of the Municipality.

4.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- 4.2.1. In addition to section 3.5, the following shall also be met to be eligible:
 - 4.2.1.1. Façade improvements must be to an existing Commercial, Institutional or Mixed-use building;
 - 4.2.1.2. Façade improvements must front towards a Public Road, excluding a laneway;
 - 4.2.1.3. Notwithstanding 4.2.1.2 where the existing main entrance to the building does not front toward a Public Road, Applicants may submit Applications for improvements to this Façade. However, Applications must also include improvements to the building's façade that faces towards a Public Road;
 - 4.2.1.4. Façade improvements must be comprehensive in nature and include a variety of elements to achieve a significant impact and aesthetic improvement. Projects must meet the intent of the Program Guidelines;
 - 4.2.1.5. Projects that include improvements that, in the opinion of the Municipality, represent routine maintenance and not a comprehensive Façade improvement are ineligible.

- 4.2.1.6. Where the Façade improvement is completed as part of an addition, the Municipality may consider Applications for the pre-existing portions of the building. Contractor estimates should itemize the work so the Municipality can identify eligible from ineligible costs.

5. Interior Improvements Grant:

5.1. Grant Value:

- 5.1.1. The Municipality will provide a 50% matching Grant, to a maximum of \$50,000 per building for eligible improvement projects.

5.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- 5.2.1. In addition to section 3.5, the following shall also be met to be eligible:
 - 5.2.1.1. Improvements are to the interior of an existing Commercial, Institutional or Commercial portion of a Mixed-use building
 - 5.2.1.2. Notwithstanding 5.2.1.1, exterior accessibility improvements are eligible.
 - 5.2.1.3. Applicants have selected at least one new (i.e., not pre-existing) improvement project listed in the Administrative Procedure; and
 - 5.2.1.4. Where the renovation is completed as part of an addition, the Municipality may consider Applications for the pre-existing portions of the building. Contractor estimates should itemize the work so that staff can identify eligible from ineligible costs.
- 5.2.2. Projects that include the following improvements are ineligible:
 - 5.2.2.1. Improvements to lobbies or hallways, unless the proposal includes improvements to at least one (1) unit in the same building.

6. Patio Grant:

6.1. Grant Value:

- 6.1.1. The Municipality will provide a 50% matching Grant, to a maximum of \$10,000 per building, for a new Patio or improvements to an existing Patio.

6.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- 6.2.1. In addition to section 3.5, the following shall also be met to be eligible:
 - 6.2.1.1. The Patio is one of the following Patio types:
 - a. Patio on private property; or
 - b. Sidewalk Patio; or

c. On-Street Patio.

- 6.2.1.2. The existing or proposed ground-level use is a restaurant, café, food establishment or similar use that is open to the public.
- 6.2.1.3. The proposed Patio meets the intent of the Program Guidelines.

7. Beautification Projects and Murals Grant:

7.1 Grant Value:

- 7.1.1. The Municipality will provide a 50% matching Grant, to a maximum of:
 - 7.1.1.1. \$5,000 per building for Beautification projects; and
 - 7.1.1.2. \$30,000 per building for Murals completed by a Professional Artist.
- 7.1.2. Applicants may submit Applications for both 7.1.1.1 (Beautification projects) and 7.1.1.2 (Mural projects). Separate Applications are required.

7.2. Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- 7.2.1. In addition to section 3.5, the following shall also be met to be eligible:
 - 7.2.1.1. Projects must be on a Commercial, Institutional or Mixed-use building or property.
 - 7.2.1.2. Projects are visible to the public and intended for their visual enjoyment and/or use.
 - 7.2.1.3. Artwork and murals should appeal to a wide, culturally diverse audience and be suitable for all ages.
 - 7.2.1.4. For Murals, a graffiti-resistant coating may be required to prolong their lifespan and reduce maintenance costs
- 7.2.2. Projects that include the following improvements are ineligible:
 - 7.2.2.1. Improvements that, in the opinion of the Municipality, represent routine maintenance and which will not achieve the Program's objectives.
 - 7.2.2.2. Projects installed in the interior of buildings, except for temporary decorative window displays in vacant units.
 - 7.2.2.3. Murals that contain advertising, logos or offensive content.
- 7.2.3. Designs and artwork are subject to final approval by the Municipality.

8. Communications and Recognition:

- 8.1. The Municipality may provide Recipients with a commemorative plaque, sign or other recognition acknowledging support from the Municipality. The recognition shall be displayed for a period of two (2) years following the completion of construction, or for the duration of temporary improvements, whichever is less.

9. Monitoring and Reporting:

9.1. The Municipality shall maintain records to enable the timely reporting to Council on the interest in, uptake of, and success of the Program. The Municipality will monitor:

- 9.1.1. Number of inquiries received about the Program;
- 9.1.2. Number of Applications received, reviewed, approved, completed and funded;
- 9.1.3. Total funding provided under the Program and the individual Grants;
- 9.1.4. Recipient feedback; and
- 9.1.5. Public perceptions.

10. Appendix: Schedule A – Downtown Map



APPROVAL

This Policy was approved by Council. It will be reviewed not later than its next Revision Date to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. It may be assessed before that time as necessary.



Don Scott, Mayor



Jade Brown, Chief Legislative Officer



Date

SUPPORTING REFERENCES AND POSITION RESPONSIBLE

Legal References:

Cross References:

- Community Investment Program Policy FIN-220
- Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program Administrative Procedure FIN-320-P01

Position Responsible: Director, Planning and Development
Director, Community Services

COUNCIL POLICY DETAILS AND REVISION HISTORY

Date	Action	Description
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