



Façade Improvement Program

2026 Guidelines

Program Purpose and Goals

The Downtown Vernon Association's (DVA) Façade Improvement Program is designed to support the vibrancy and continued economic development of Downtown Vernon by investing directly in the appearance and quality of its commercial properties.

Aiming to inject \$150,000 into downtown, the program encourages property and business owners to make meaningful exterior improvements that enhance individual storefronts while contributing to a more attractive, vibrant, and welcoming downtown.

The program aims to stimulate private investment, provide visual momentum, strengthen the overall appearance and character of the downtown, improve the pedestrian and customer experience, and support the long-term economic vitality of the district. By partnering with downtown businesses and property owners, the DVA can leverage its investment to create visible improvements that benefit individual businesses and the broader downtown community.

Funding for the Façade Improvement Program is provided by Downtown Vernon Association.

The Program

These program guidelines are intended to maximize the program benefit for improving aesthetics of Vernon's BIA.

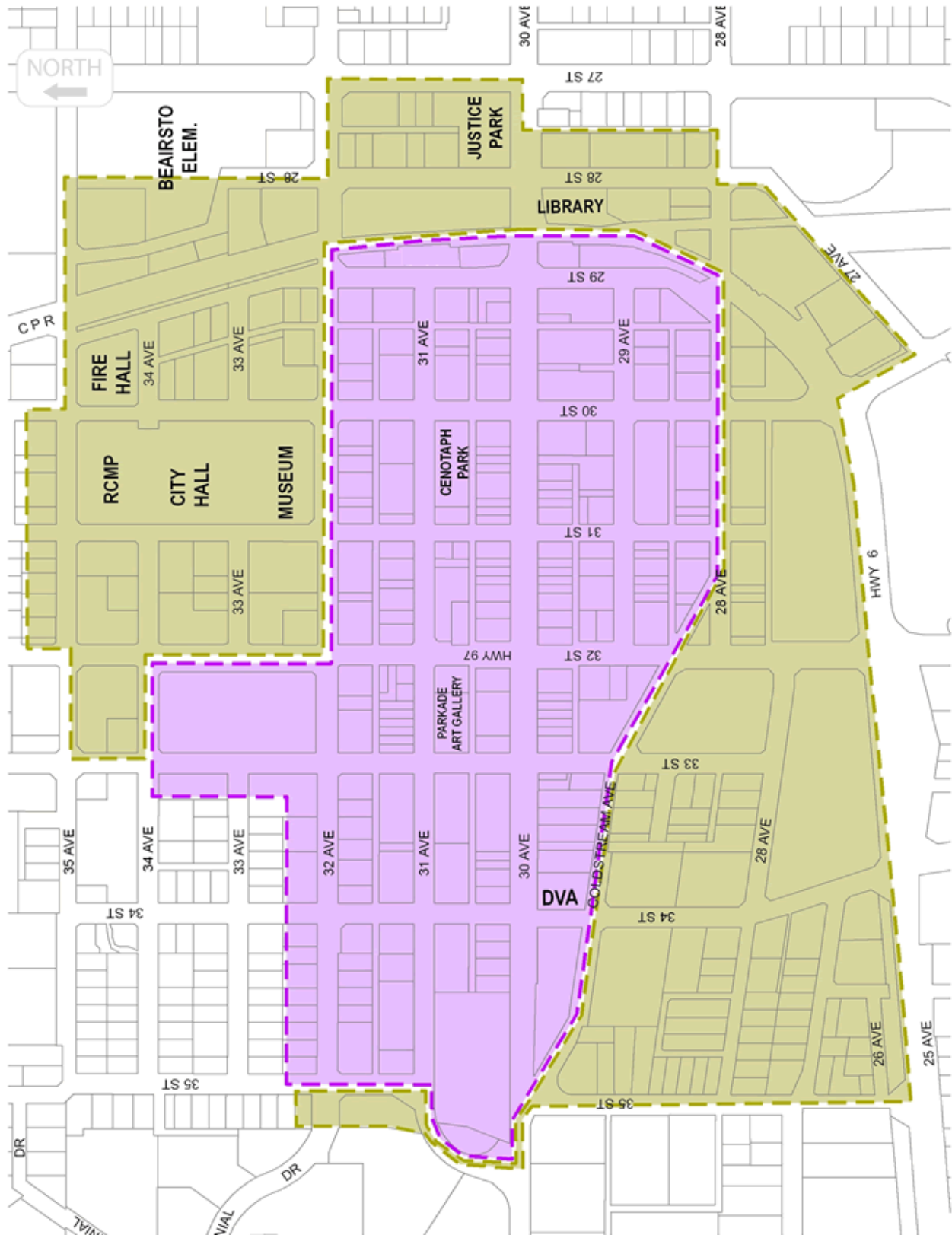
The DVA will reimburse funds covering 50% of completed work to a maximum of \$5,000 per project to improve the facades of commercial buildings.

Projects must have a minimum total cost of \$3,000. (Therefore the DVA would reimburse \$1,500.)

Application deadline is May 31, 2027. Applications may be approved prior to deadline.

Each eligible commercial storefront or business premises may receive one grant to a maximum of \$5,000. Where a building contains multiple distinct commercial storefronts or business premises, each may be considered separately for funding. The DVA reserves the right to limit the total funding awarded to a single property or property owner to ensure program funds are distributed broadly throughout the downtown.

Eligible Areas



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-profit organizations (tenants)
- 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 storefront has not received a previous grant under this program for the proposed improvements

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 Business Improvement Area (BIA) - as defined in Eligible Areas, see map.
- 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 that complies with the City of Vernon Signage Bylaw #4489.
- Wayfinding signage (sign located on the business property i.e. at the bottom of a driveway).

- Signs are eligible for 50% to a maximum of \$1000 and must adhere to any signage bylaws and regulations
- Accessibility improvements (ramps, wider doors etc.) to the outside of the building only
- Patios
- Minor exterior repairs necessary to facilitate an approved façade improvement (not eligible as a stand-alone project).

Ineligible Façade Improvements

The following improvements are ineligible:

- **Improvements not visible from the public right of way**
- Routine maintenance
- Roofs
- Non-permanent fixtures (benches, planters, patio heaters etc.)
- Landscaping
- Paving
- Fencing
- Interior/internal improvements
- 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

Eligible Costs/Expenses

- Direct project labour costs
- Design, architectural or engineering fees (related to facade only)
- Contractor fees
- Rental of tools and equipment
- Project related materials and supplies
- Shipping and/or freight
- PST
- Municipal permit and application fees **directly related** to the approved façade improvement.

Ineligible Costs/Expenses

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

Design Guidelines

The intent of the Façade Improvement Program is to support high-quality improvements that enhance individual properties while contributing positively to the overall appearance, character and economic vitality of Downtown Vernon.

Projects do not need to conform to a particular architectural style. Creative and distinctive storefront designs are encouraged, provided they contribute positively to the surrounding streetscape.

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

Designs need to clearly outline the proposed improvements to allow the DVA to accurately evaluate the project and clearly see that the finished product looks like what was intended during the application process.

Proposed improvements should, where applicable:

- **Enhance the existing building** by considering its architecture, proportions, materials and distinctive features rather than unnecessarily concealing or removing them.
- **Improve the street-level experience** by creating an attractive, welcoming and visually engaging storefront for pedestrians and customers.
- **Use durable, quality materials and finishes** appropriate for a commercial environment and intended to provide a lasting improvement.
- **Treat the façade as a cohesive design**, with elements such as colours, materials, signage, lighting, awnings, windows and entrances working together rather than appearing as unrelated additions.
- **Maintain storefront visibility and transparency** where appropriate, particularly at street level.
- **Ensure signage and lighting complement the building** and are appropriately scaled and integrated into the overall façade design.
- **Consider neighbouring properties and the broader streetscape** while still allowing individual businesses to express their own identity and character.
- **Create a meaningful and visible improvement** when viewed from the public realm. Projects demonstrating a substantial positive impact on the appearance of the property and surrounding streetscape will be given preference.

All improvements must comply with applicable City of Vernon bylaws, permitting requirements, building codes and other regulatory requirements. Approval under the DVA Façade Improvement Program does not constitute approval by the City of Vernon or any other regulatory authority.

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

Business Application 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 Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.

1. Owner/Tenant contacts the Downtown Vernon Association to determine if the building qualifies for the Façade Improvement Program, discuss your project, and obtain the Program Guide and Application.
2. Owner/Tenant submits a complete application with designs. All required supporting materials and documents (including owner authorization) must be received for an application to be considered complete.
3. The DVA will review the application and proposed façade improvements to ensure that improvements meet the applicable Design Guidelines and the Façade Improvement Program Guidelines.
4. Applications are reviewed and a decision to accept or reject the application is made.
5. Applicant is advised of the decision by email and/or phone call.
6. For successful applications, a Letter of Understanding is sent to the applicant which must be signed by the owner/tenant and a representative of the DVA.
7. Owner/Tenant acquires any required permits and completes the renovations.
8. Owner/Tenant provides verification of expenses and proof of payment (including invoices or other confirmations of payment) and submits their totals on the provided expense tracking sheet.
9. Owner/Tenant provides a Certification of Completion signed by the applicant or contractor, indicating that all work described in the application/approval has been completed and paid in full.
10. Owner/Tenant provides before and after photos (matching) and any other supporting documentation.
 - a. Owner/Tenant acknowledges they may be contacted by the Downtown Vernon Association to supply a testimonial about the value of the supported façade improvement to the business.
11. Owner/Tenant provides proof that the improvements have passed final inspection for municipal permits (where required) and meet all building standards and codes (where required).
12. The DVA verifies that the renovations meet the Letter of Understanding requirements and approves reimbursement.
13. Applicant is issued a cheque or e-transfer.

Please note:

Approved projects must be completed by December 31, 2027.

Evaluation/Selection Process

The DVA will review all complete and eligible applications. Where funding requests exceed available program funding, applications will be prioritized based on the evaluation criteria below.

First, the DVA determines whether an application is **eligible and complete**. Eligible applications are then evaluated against five criteria:

Criterion	Weight
Visible impact on the downtown streetscape	30%
Overall quality and significance of the improvement	25%
Contribution to downtown vibrancy/customer experience	20%
Private investment leveraged by DVA funding	15%
Consistency with program Design Guidelines	10%

Additional Information

The DVA reserves the right to approve an application for an amount less than the maximum grant requested.

Any material changes to an approved project must receive written approval from the DVA prior to the work being undertaken in order to remain eligible for reimbursement.