



## **Storefront Improvement Incentive PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **BACKGROUND**

To assist property owners in the downtown area with private space improvements, Neepawa has developed a Storefront Improvement Incentive Program (SIIP) for businesses located within the Town of Neepawa. The program is managed and administered by the Economic Development Office and provides funding for up to 50% of the eligible costs to a maximum of \$5,000 per commercial property. The incentive is a reimbursement program and will be paid out upon the completion of the project and after all criteria is met. All completed applications are due on or before June 28, 2019.

### **INTENT**

This incentive program is intended to assist property owners and business tenants to enhance storefronts with significant improvements to Neepawa's commercial district.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The following is a list of objectives that outline the purpose of the program.

- To assist commercial property and business owners with improvements to their buildings/storefronts to create a more vibrant and attractive business corridor and downtown area;
- To encourage the economic vitality of the business corridor and downtown area, and;
- To create a welcoming and appealing retail area.

### **IMPROVEMENT ELIGIBILITY**

#### *Eligible properties:*

Note that new construction, national franchises, government buildings, residences, churches or other religious institutions are not eligible. An independent owner of a national franchise may be eligible.

#### *Eligible improvements include:*

- Replacement or restoration of cornices, eaves, parapets and other architectural features
- Replacement of windows
- Redesign and reconstruction of the storefront
- Installation of appropriate new signage or improvements to existing signage, including billboards
- Installation of canopies and/or awnings
- Installation of exterior lighting
- Restoration of historic features
- Repainting, cleaning or restoration of facades as one component of the overall initiative
- Entranceway modifications
- Engineering and/or design studies/drawings

*Ineligible improvements include:*

- Building repairs or structural foundations
- Roof repairs not related to exterior aesthetics
- Interior plumbing
- Security bars or blinds
- Electrical or structural upgrades not associated with the storefront improvements
- Non-permanent fixtures (e.g. Banner signs, interior window coverings, planters, benches, etc.)
- Personal property or equipment
- Tenant improvements not associated with a comprehensive upgrade
- Sidewalks and paving not associated with improvements
- Metal clad siding
- Accessibility ramps

## **Program Requirements**

The Storefront Improvement Incentive Program is available to all commercial property owner(s) and their commercial tenant(s) within the Town of Neepawa. There is no cost to submit an application for this program.

*Eligibility requirements*

- The program is intended to encourage significant improvements to storefronts. Therefore, applications that include multiple activities will be considered a higher priority.
- All applications for improvements under this program are subject to the availability of funding. Commercial properties will only be considered if the work outlined in the application addresses the objectives of the SIIP.
- Commercial tenant(s) must provide written authorization from the registered property owner(s). Tenant(s) should have a minimum of two years remaining on a lease from the date of application.
- Storefront improvement incentives will not be issued to any eligible applicants who are in arrears of any municipal financial obligation.
- Incentives will not be issued to correct any Building Code, Fire Code or Property Standards orders.
- In rare or complex cases, engineered drawings may be required.
- No funds will be issued for works that have received incentives under any other municipal programs.
- Any work initiated before the application for the SIIP is received and approved by the Neepawa may not be eligible for funding.
- All work must be completed by December 31, 2020.

*Program Assistance and Requirements*

- Proposed storefront improvements within Neepawa will adhere to the Storefront Improvement Incentive Program guidelines.
- All work must comply with municipal, provincial and federal regulations
- The maximum amount of any incentive that may be issued under this Program shall be \$5,000 per property and the incentive shall not exceed 50% of the costs of the eligible work per storefront or building. Corner properties may be eligible for an increased incentive.
- Assistance granted to a particular project is not transferable to another property.

- Applicants that require partial closure of the sidewalk in front of their business, are required to contact Neepawa Area Planning Office to review requirements and acquire approval prior to construction. Failure to comply may result in forfeiting incentive funds.
- Neepawa reserves the right to review all completed eligible works to ensure the monetary value of the work completed coincides with the monetary value of the work proposed as indicated on any approved incentive application. Should the Town deem the monetary value of work completed does not coincide with the monetary value of the work proposed, Neepawa reserves the right to reduce the amount of the incentive accordingly.
- Where construction or renovations are substantially suspended or discontinued for more than six months, the Town may revoke any approved applications.
- The applicant must provide Neepawa with copies of professional invoices and proof of payment prior to any reimbursement.
- Neepawa reserves the right to discontinue this program at any time.

#### *Procedures and Approvals*

- All required building or sign permits must be obtained prior to work starting. Starting work prior to obtaining permit will forfeit the incentive.
- Approval of an incentive and its amount shall be subject to the availability of funding as determined on an annual basis by Neepawa Town Council.
- Potential applicants are required to submit a complete program application form, including the required drawings, to the Neepawa Economic Development Officer prior to the submission of any sign or building permit application. The Town may specify additional submission requirements, such as but not limited to plans, elevations and multiple quotations.
- Complete applications will be reviewed and only those applications that meet the program's objectives, Neepawa's Storefront Improvement Incentive Program Guidelines, Neepawa's Zoning Bylaw and the Manitoba Building Code will be considered.
- The eligibility of the proposal will be assessed based on the whole project. The approving authority will consider all aspects of the applied improvements to allocate funding.
- A proper design rendering or schematic (i.e. a high-quality drawing) must also be included with the application. The rendering must clearly and accurately depict what the completed renovation will look like.
- Applicants must provide proof of property insurance.
- Eligible costs will be cost of materials, equipment and contracted labour.
- The Town reserves the right to approve less than 50% of the requested incentive.
- Applicants will be notified in writing if their proposed application has been accepted. This letter will outline additional items and conditions of the program.
- All contractors must be licensed by the Province of Manitoba and within Neepawa and carry the required insurance. All construction contracts will be between the applicant and the contractor.
- If the applicant has not authorized contractor(s) to begin work within three (3) months of incentive approval, the Town has the right to revoke the incentive.
- Prior to approving the funds dispersal to the applicant for the Storefront Improvement Incentive Program, Town staff may inspect the building to review the condition of the improvements.
- Upon project completion, Neepawa reserves the right to acknowledge the participation in the Storefront Improvement Incentive Program through Social Media and other marketing efforts.

### *Reimbursement of Funds*

- This is a reimbursement program and therefore the incentive will be paid out upon completion of the project.
- Upon completion of the eligible works, the applicant must provide Neepawa with copies of professional invoices and proof of payment. Town Staff may conduct an inspection of the completed work, and do what is necessary to verify the accuracy of all invoices.
- Upon verification that the eligible works are complete, and invoices and proof of payment have been verified to be accurate, the incentive funds shall be issued within thirty (30) days of receipt.

## **MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS**

It is agreed upon that the applicant will maintain the storefront into the future. As with all properties in Neepawa, upkeep of a property must be maintained in accordance with the Property Standards Bylaw.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Applications can be submitted to the Neepawa Town Office by 4:30 p.m. on June 28, 2019. The number of projects awarded will be determined by funding availability.

## **APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

It is suggested that you discuss your plans with the Neepawa Economic Development Officer before completing the application process to ensure the proposed project complies with the program.

Attached please include:

- Completed application form
- Drawings, plans, etc. of the proposed improvement
- Quotes or Estimates
- Proof of insurance

## **CONTACT**

For more information, please contact:

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