



# **City of Vancouver** *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

**Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability Department**

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## HERITAGE FACADE REHABILITATION PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## 1 Introduction

City Council has approved a citywide program of incentives to facilitate the conservation and rehabilitation of heritage building principal facades. The program will be available for a four-year period (2019-2022) to financially assist owners or tenants of Vancouver Heritage Register-listed buildings for conservation work and seismic stabilization of principal facades and/or its significant components. This document introduces the Heritage Facade Rehabilitation Program (HFRP) Policies and Procedures.

For information on the other City's incentives available, refer to the Heritage Incentive Program (HIP) and Heritage House Conservation Program (HHCP), managed by the Vancouver Heritage Foundation. Applications for Facade Grants must be independent from applications seeking other incentives. However, applicants may apply for more than one program on a coordinated basis. Owners who apply for the facade incentive are eligible to apply for the HIP incentives at a later date, except for the scope of work already incentivized through the HFRP. House typology and similar scale structures of primarily wood-frame construction may be eligible under the HHCP but not under the HFRP.

The City strongly recommends that applicants consult with City staff, to review the proposal and submission requirements, before applying for incentives. The City also notes that in case where federal or provincial heritage incentives are sought for the same scope of work they will be applied before the municipal incentive programs and the funding available from the City of Vancouver will be decreased accordingly.

## 2 Principles

In preparing the methodology to determine heritage incentives, staff applied the following guiding principles:

- **Balance between objectivity and accuracy** – The methodology and assumptions used for calculating heritage incentives are designed to best approximate actual costs and values, while at the same time have, as much as possible, been selected to be objective and consistent over time and across projects, as well as readily accessible to all participants.
- **Equal treatment of equals** - All applicants and applications will be treated in the same manner in terms of the application process and incentive calculations.
- **Negotiated process with City having ultimate approval** – The scope of the project being submitted for a heritage incentive and all cost estimates submitted by the applicant as part of the application process will be reviewed by City staff, and may have to be revised so that City staff ultimately agrees with them in terms of accuracy, reasonableness, and economic and program viability.

## 3 Facade Rehabilitation Grant Program Budget

A total of \$1.2 million will be available for façade grants over the four-year term of this program (2019-2022). City Council has approved \$1.2 million in the City's current Capital Plan, in allotments of \$300,000 annually.

This program is available to assist owners and tenants with the costs of rehabilitating heritage building facades. The program covers 50% of costs up to a maximum of \$50,000 per principal facade. A principal facade faces onto a primary street. The City deems buildings on corner sites to have more than one principal facade, and owners and tenants may apply for a grant for each principal facade. Tenants may apply for funding with the written consent of the owner. The objective is to enhance the exterior historic appearance of buildings in a manner that is sympathetic to the heritage character of the area and to encourage economic revitalization opportunities. A priority for this program is the rehabilitation of ground floor spaces (storefronts) for active uses such as retail and restaurants, and the seismic stabilization of cornices, parapet walls, and other projecting façade components.

## 4 Eligible Work

The primary eligible scope of work includes ground floor storefront conservation and seismic stabilization of major projecting architectural components (cornices, parapets, historic signs). Other eligible work includes conservation of building envelop materials (e.g. brick, stone, wood), windows, doors, various exterior architectural features, historic signs and awnings, architectural lighting on principal facades, as well as an appropriate new design (restoration or rehabilitation work) as the case may be.

Seismic stabilization of the cornice, parapet walls and other major projecting components are mandatory unless confirmed by a Professional Structural Engineer to be in structurally sound condition.

The Chief Building Official (CBO) considers the conservation and repair of existing exteriors to restore them to their original condition, including safety or building envelope issues, are voluntary improvements and would not trigger additional upgrading requirements. Typically, the replication of a heritage facade and new storefronts, designed in a manner consistent with design guidelines, does not trigger upgrades either. However, the CBO will assess each application on a case by case basis to check that they do not create accessibility or water leakage problems and that any unsafe conditions are rectified. Applicants should review proposals with the CBO at an early stage.

## 5 Eligibility Criteria

- Privately owned commercial and non-commercial (including non-profit operated) constructed primarily of unreinforced masonry, citywide.
- Buildings listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register are automatically eligible. Council may add buildings to the Register if they meet the City's evaluation criteria.
- To receive grants, properties must be subject to a covenant under section 219 of the Land Title Act that relates to the conservation of heritage property as specified by sec 206(2) of the Vancouver Charter.
- The property owner must not be in arrears in payment of property taxes.
- The applicant must complete the work in accordance with the approved permit, and must comply with all heritage conservation standards, design guidelines, policies, bylaws or complementary standards and provisions that apply before the City disburses any grant to the applicant.
- The City will not consider retroactive funding for work completed prior to submission of the grant application.

## 6 Application Requirements

Applications must include:

- A completed application form,
- A cover letter describing the proposed work,
- Statement of Significance for the building,
- Conservation Plan outlining conservation procedures,
- Architectural drawings and coloured renderings accurately describing the existing, condition and proposed work,
- A minimum of 3 competitive cost estimates of the proposed work.

In addition to these criteria, the City may require further historic research, engineering, or other studies in support of the application. Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada apply in preparation of the conservation plan. Applicants are responsible for providing any further information the City may require to determine the cost of proposed work and incentive amount.

## 7 Application Costs

The costs of preparing and submitting an application, including any consultant fees, are the sole responsibility of the applicant. The applicant may apply to recover such costs as part of the incentives; however, the City will only approve such recovery for successful applications.

## 8 Application Consideration and Evaluation Criteria

The City will use the following criteria to evaluate applications:

- Level and quality of heritage conservation work proposed,
- Seismic stabilization work proposed,
- Rehabilitation of ground floor for active uses,
- Relationship of building to groupings of heritage buildings,
- Compliance with design guidelines, conservation standards and principles, and by-laws,
- Amount of incentive being sought as a proportion of capital investment (the City will consider more favourably those projects proposing a higher level of private investment).

The City will complete its review of the application, and determine the value of any heritage incentives it decides to provide concurrently with its review of a development permit application. All applications will be carefully considered, but will not necessarily receive incentives at all, or to the level being requested.

City Council must approve all grants by a 2/3 majority.

The City will also require registration against title of a covenant, easement, and/or statutory right of way, to ensure continued maintenance of the restored/rehabilitated façade for the period of 15 years. Such covenant must be in form and substance, and with registered priority that is, satisfactory to the City.

## 9 Completion Procedure

Heritage conservation work contemplated under the HFRP application must be completed within a period of two (2) years from the date of the legal agreement being registered on title. A development permit may not be issued unless a legal agreement is in place (registered). If not completed within the two-year (2) time frame as described, no further extension will be granted and the applicant will not be able to claim the HFRP incentive even if the project is subsequently completed. In a case where special circumstances have unexpectedly affected the project's timeline, a one-year (1) extension may be considered. To receive a one-year (1) extension, the applicant would need to apply within the initial two-year (2) term and to provide sufficient evidence for consideration. The completion date is the date of an Occupancy Permit issuance, or if not applicable, completion of all related construction.

## 10 Grant Release

The grant is claimed by submitting a Letter of Completion stating the completion status of all construction works including heritage conservation, implementation of the conservation plan, compliance with the Legal Agreement registered on title, and confirmation of the issuance of the Occupancy Permit, if applicable. In the enclosure, the applicant should submit the following documentation:

- Financial statement summary, including an itemized summary of payments made clearly identifying and counting only costs related to the approved heritage conservation scope of work,
  - Copies of all related invoices should be made available for review,
  - Copy of the Occupancy Permit, if applicable,
  - Financial information for grant disbursement.
- Note: Funds will be disbursed electronically.

Upon receipt of the Letter of Completion, staff will conduct a site visit to verify the project status as reported. The site visit will be conducted by the Heritage Consultant who supervised the work, the owner or it's representative (usually General Contractor or Architect) and the City's representative (usually the Heritage Planner). Staff will also review submitted financial statements to determine the final project cost and confirm the incentive amount in accordance with the HFRP Policies and Procedures and the legal agreement.

Upon successful completion of the site visit, a review of the submitted financial statement and subject to all other HFRP requirements being met, City staff will initiate release of the heritage grant payment.

Should it be found that the conservation work has not been completed as agreed or the required documentation not filed as requested, the City retains the right to not issue incentives until all requirements have been met, or to reduce the grant payment accordingly. During the process of verifying and adjusting the grant the City may ask for additional information and retains the right to a final decision on the matter. Only after all the above has been completed to the City's satisfaction, the grant would become available.

Process Chart for Facade Rehabilitation Grant Program

	<b>MILESTONE/ ACTION</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>INPUTS</b>	<b>OUTPUTS</b>
1	Inquiry - meeting to discuss concept	- heritage staff - applicant	- concept - approach to heritage conservation - research and evaluation	- feedback & issue identification - advice on process
2	Applications for grant and development permit submitted	- applicant	- development permit (architectural drawings) - supporting documentation/reports as required - request for facade grant including 3 cost estimates	- application
3	Review & Assessment of Development Application	- staff - community advisory committee	- review/evaluate for compliance with policies, by-laws, regulations and incentive program criteria	- comments from advisory committee & staff
4	Preliminary decision on development and incentive applications	- staff	- receive feedback	- staff recommendation (incorporating input from public and neighbourhood advisory body) on development and incentives application - "draft" prior-to letter
5	Approval of facade grant by City Council	- staff - City Council	- report to Council	- Council decision on facade grant (requires 2/3 majority)
6	Staff decision on development permit application	- Director of Planning	- input from review	- development application approved with conditions or not approved
7	Revisions as required	- applicant	- revisions responding to conditions	- revised application



Process Chart for Facade Rehabilitation Grant Program (Continued)

	<b>MILESTONE/ ACTION</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>INPUTS</b>	<b>OUTPUTS</b>
8	Development and Heritage Alteration Permits issued and Legal agreements completed	- staff		- development permit (including Heritage Alteration Permit) issued - legal agreements registered on title
9	Obtain other permits (building etc.) as required	- applicant - staff	- application and supporting documentation as required	- permits issued
10	Construction begins	- applicant		
11	Project completed and heritage work verified	- applicant - staff	- review for compliance with approved scheme	- work inspected and verified
12	Grant disbursed	- staff	- authorize release of funds	- payment made

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