

CABOT TRAIL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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Cabot Trail Façade Program
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GENERAL INFORMATION:

The Cabot Trail Façade Improvement Program is administered by the Municipality of Victoria County who is working directly with a Cabot Trail Façade & Streetscape Management Committee. The Management Committee has representation from Inverness Municipality, Victoria Municipality, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency as well as other leaders from the business and community sector.

The Cabot Trail Façade Improvement Program is offered as an incentive for businesses and property owners to improve their storefronts. It is a 50/50 cost sharing program that is available to eligible participants while program funding is available. The following outlines details of the program.

Façade Programs are to assist commercial business owners within a designated region in the renovation of building facades in an effort to increase visitors, increase sales revenues, increase property values, and improve the aesthetics and curbside appeal of individual storefronts.

Objectives of the Cabot Trail Façade Program is to:

- Raise the overall standard and image of Cabot Trail beautification
- Develop a local appreciation of design expertise and good design practice
- Improve the Cabot Trail business climate through increased visitations, local business sales and revenues
- Improve the look and function of each participating business
- Attract customers with appropriate expectations
- Help market and promote each participating business's image
- Better merchandise businesses products/services

Return on Investment:

Coordinated programs throughout Cape Breton have been successful to attract public and private investments that stimulate the economy and strengthen core communities. A survey conducted in 2013 of Façade Program participants (Cheticamp, Mabou, Cabot Trail and St. Peter's, 2009-2013) concluded 88% of survey participants reported their business had experienced an increase in business traffic that they felt was directly linked to the program and 85% of survey participants reported their business had experienced an increase in business sales that they felt was directly linked to participation in the program. Business sales were reported to increase by an average of 15% (the range was from 5% to over 100% increase in business). It is important to note that this increase in business was during a time of economic downturn.

1.0 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT

Guidelines In General:

- All improvements must be compatible with applicable zoning codes, satisfy permit requirements and conform to any other regulatory restrictions.
- If a building has historic or aesthetic merit, improvements should be designed to reveal the building’s original style, form, detail, color, material, etc. whenever possible.
- All eras and building styles acceptable within the scope of character of the Cabot Trail.
- All applicable permits must be in place.
- Design guidelines must be adhered to.

Designated Façade Area:

- Tourism related commercial businesses who have been identified as being within the Cabot Trail Region – **Communities who are only accessible from the Cabot Trail or are within 4 kms or less from The Cabot Trail Road.**



Criteria for Eligibility:

- Building/business must be a tourism-related business;
- Building is in designated Cabot Trail Façade area;
- Building must be assessed as commercial building;
- Building with a combined retail/service and residential usage are eligible if 50% or more of the building is used for commercial space;
- Business must be in good standings with Registry of Joint Stocks;
- Building exterior work only;
- Building owner must be the applicant;
- Proposed building Façade Improvements meet Cabot Trail Façade;
- Improvement Program Design Guidelines;
- If your building is currently registered as a Heritage Building, your design must then adhere to Provincial and Municipal Heritage guidelines, as well as, Façade Program Guidelines; and
- All accommodations must be licensed with Nova Scotia Approved Program and/or Canada Select.

What is not Eligible?

- Building interior work;
- Expansion or addition to existing building;
- Any façade project which commenced prior to a call for applications;
- Government buildings;
- Banks and financial institutions;
- Churches;
- Buildings containing full residential occupancy only;
- Paving/parking lots;
- Projects under \$10,000;

- Business Franchise and Store Chains;
- Not for Profit organizations; and
- HST.

Façade Incentive Program:

Approved businesses are eligible for 50% (excluding **HST**) of their total approved project cost to a maximum cap of \$40,000(\$20,000 business/\$20,000 ACOA) of labor and materials for:

- Applicable building permits and fees;
- Exterior siding, doors, windows and materials;
- Exterior signage and lighting within property boundaries;
- Certain landscaping improvements;
- Other exterior improvements that meet the goals of the program will be considered;
- Roofing up to 25% of total project cost.

Priority will be given to:

- Businesses who have not previously participated in a façade program;
- On a first come first served basis;
- Buildings that are, have been or will be used for commercial purposes.

2.0 FACADE DESIGN

There is a major focus on quality facade designs for the Cabot Trail Facade Program. **Facade design concepts are covered at 100% (no cost incurred by property owner) for businesses who participate in the Cabot Trail Facade Program.**

However, as a sign of commitment to the program by the business owner, each business who participates in the façade program by submitting an application, will be asked to pay **\$500** at the time of application in which they would be credited the same amount at the completion of their façade. If the business does not complete the façade, the \$500 **will not be reimbursed.**

To get started, contact Project Coordinator, Lucille Timmons, to set up an appointment for you with the Facade Design Consultant.

In most cases the Design Consultant will prepare the design concept in consultations with property owner for a complete facade and signage package, even though the business operator may not intend to implement all components in the course of this Facade program. This is an opportunity to have a long term plan for a complete concept that may be phased in over a longer term if need be.

3.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

There are three phases to the application process.

Phase 1 – Façade Design Application Process

The First part of the application process is to design your façade and signage concept for your building and to have the design approved by the Management Committee.

Complete page 1 and 2 of application form and submit to the Façade Program Coordinator, Lucille Timmons. Application should include:

- 1) Your contact information;
- 2) Written scope of proposed façade design
- 3) Proof of building ownership and commercial tax assessment (copy of building deed/ property tax bill);
- 4) Your chosen color scheme color chips;
- 5) Photos of all visible sides of your building.

Upon receiving notice that your proposed façade design is approved you may proceed to the second part of the application process.

Phase 2 – Request for Façade Construction Funding

The second part of the application process is to obtain funding approval for your project. It is recommended that you obtained at least two quotes from contractors and suppliers. You may proceed to complete page 3 of the application form and then submit to Project Coordinator, Lucille Timmons. This section includes:

- 1) Name of contractors approached, who responded and attach contractors building quotes on "Request for Quotes" Forms. Applicants are encouraged to seek more than one estimate.
- 2) Your written recommendation of your choice contractor.
- 3) Scope of project work with attached supporting specifications.

Phase 3 – Approval of Façade Construction Application

- 1) Only completed applications will be reviewed by the Management Committee.
- 2) If your application has been approved you will be notified by Lucille Timmons.
- 3) Approved applicants and the Municipality of Victoria County will enter a contractual agreement.
- 4) Façade projects are to be completed within set time line identified in the contract unless the Management Committee / the Municipality Of Victoria County has given written permission to extend the completion date to applicant.

Submitting an application does not automatically qualify an applicant for approval. Applications must be approved by the Management Committee. Any situation beyond the noted guidelines will be evaluated on an individual basis by the Management Committee. The Management Committee will render a final decision regarding approval of an applicant's proposed Façade construction project in a reasonable time period.

Reimbursement Process:

The Municipality of Victoria County will not contribute to any costs incurred prior to November 8th, 2016. Reimbursement of **approved Façade construction** is paid once the following conditions have been met:

- All Façade work is completed according to **a)** approved design and **b)** by contract deadline.
- All projects must be fully paid before reimbursement can take place.
- All required documentation is provided to Project Coordinator, Lucille Timmons (proof of payment including copies of paid invoices and cancelled checks covering entire Façade project costs).
- Final inspection and sign-off is given by the Façade Management Committee.

PLEASE NOTE:

Contractors – The Management Committee encourages businesses to use qualified and registered contractors and ensure workmen's compensation coverage for project workers.

Building Permits – Building permits may be required for your façade renovations. To verify please contact the Eastern District Planning Commission. Inspections are required for all work for which a building permit has been issued and the request for the inspections must be made by the applicant. The inspections are conducted by the inspection staff of the Eastern District Planning Commission, using the National Building Code as a reference when evaluating the safety of the project.

No reimbursement will be made until proof of inspection has been provided. For Inverness County please contact Cyril Leblanc at 902-787-2900. For Victoria County please contact David Mackenzie at 902-295-2900.

Environmental – It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure their contractors are capable of addressing any environmental issues which might arise regarding the building site and use of project materials.

Nova Scotia Power – It is the responsibility of the applicant or the applicant's contractor to contact Nova Scotia Power to schedule cover-up when doing renovations near power lines.

*The Municipality of Victoria County (as façade project administrator) **will not** provide any advances regarding approved applications and is not responsible for negotiating with municipal officials, bankers, contractors, material suppliers or any individual or agency on behalf of the applicant. The Municipality will provide support and direction when it deems necessary.*

