



Downtown Perth Community Improvement Plan Perth Green Business Loan program Program Guide

The intent of the Downtown Perth Community Improvement Plan (CIP) – Perth Green Business Loan program is to provide a financial incentive in the form of an interest-free loan, to assist property owners to improve the safety and efficiency of existing commercial and mixed-use (commercial/residential) buildings located within the Community Improvement Plan area. The program applies to upgrades for structural, electrical, or other utilities for the purpose of complying with the *Ontario Building Code* or improving the energy efficiency of a building or unit or works done to make buildings accessible under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

Who can apply?

Owners of commercial and/or mixed use properties located within the designated Community Improvement Area may apply.

In the event that the Applicant is a multiple property owner project funding will be limited to two (2) projects annually*.

** Should there be unallocated funds after September 30th those individuals who own multiple properties will be considered on a first come, first-served basis until such a time that all funds have been allocated.*

How does the program work?

The Program is structured as an Interest-Free Loan Program where the Town will provide a Loan to the Applicant equal to 50% of the average construction cost to a maximum of \$20,000 per unit for works related to *Ontario Building Code* upgrades or for works related to energy efficiency improvements or works done to make buildings accessible under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

What kind of work is eligible for a loan?

Except where rendered ineligible as per the notes below, the following works will be supported under this Program:

- Building upgrades for works related to the health and safety of the building that requires work to bring the building or unit into compliance with the current Ontario Building Code;

- Replacement of existing heating systems with *ENERGY STAR*® systems;
- Replacement of central air-conditioning systems with *ENERGY STAR*® units or systems;
- Replacement of existing hot water systems with recognized energy efficient systems;
- Insulation upgrade to attics, exterior walls, exposed floors, basements and crawl spaces;
- Replacement of doors, windows and skylights with *ENERGY STAR*® models (or an approved restoration using heritage materials that is intended to increase efficiency);
- Implementation of a green roof, which will mean a roofing system that is partially (at least 20% of the roof area) or completely covered with vegetation in order to absorb rainwater and to provide insulation;
- Works done to make buildings accessible under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- Installation of small-scale renewable energy generation systems which are not subject to approval under the *Green Energy Act*, as determined by the Ministry of Energy; and
- Other similar repairs/improvements as may be approved, at the discretion of the Town in consultation with the Implementation Advisory Panel.

Criteria

- With regard to an Application for a Loan for energy efficiency improvements, the Applicant will be required to demonstrate that the improvement results in a significant improvement to the energy efficiency of the building or unit. A significant improvement to the energy efficiency of the building or unit is defined by Energy Star ratings or a savings of 20% or more in utility costs or a reduction in drafts from the outside environment.
- Proposed façade improvements to front, rear or side walls must maintain any existing heritage or architecturally significant characteristics by retaining, restoring or matching: glass, wood, stone or brick elements; i.e., materials used shall be consistent in type and form with existing materials, and the use of synthetic components, except where they are already in use will generally not qualify for assistance.
- Loans are provided on a one-time basis to each eligible owner for each approved project. See note above for multiple property owners.
- All alterations/improvements made to buildings shall be pursuant to all applicable permits and constructed in accordance to the Ontario Building Code, *Ontario Heritage Act* and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals.

What conditions must be met to be eligible for a loan?

- Projects must be within the dedicated Downtown Perth Community Improvement Area (see attached map);
- Applications must be submitted on the official Application Form;
- The property shall be improved in such a manner that the improvement does not compromise the reasons for heritage designations or pre-existing heritage features;
- The Applicant will be required to submit three (3) cost estimates from bona fide contractors for the upgrade or retrofit to be completed;
- The Applicant may be required to submit professional architectural/design drawings which shall be in conformity to the issued urban design guidelines, Ontario Building Code, heritage design guidelines, and sign by-laws where applicable;
- The Applicant may be required to submit other supporting documents as specified;
- Construction must be completed within one (1) calendar year of the date of the approval of the Loan. If the work is not completed within one (1) calendar year the Loan commitment will be re-evaluated by the Panel.

How do I apply for a loan?

- Arrange a pre-Application meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work and, project timing etc.;
- If authorized to apply for a loan, complete an Application Form and ensure that your Application includes all of the required documents.

What happens next?

- Applications and supporting documentations are reviewed by staff resulting in recommendations to the CIP Implementation Advisory Panel;
- Staff or the Panel may request clarification or additional supporting documentation;
- Staff will conduct an initial site visit(s) and inspect the property if necessary;
- The CIP Implementation Advisory Panel will receive the staff recommendations and approve/reject, under delegated authority, all applications in accordance with the eligibility requirements of the CIP Perth Green Business Loan program;
- If the Application is approved by the Implementation Advisory Panel, the Terms of a Loan Agreement will be negotiated with the Director of Corporate Services as per the Financial Loan Procedures;
- A Commitment Letter will be given to the Applicant;
- A copy of the Loan Agreement will be executed and a copy of the Agreement will be returned to the Applicant;
- Construction of the approved works may now commence, subject to the issuance of all applicable permits;
- The Applicant will contact the Economic Development Coordinator toward work completion;
- Upon completion of works, Town staff will conduct a final site visit and inspection (as necessary) to ensure compliance with the Loan Agreement and any permits pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act* or the Ontario Building Code;
- The Applicant will submit to the Town, a post project report with copies of invoices and “after” pictures of the completed works;
- Upon review and approval of all the submitted documentation including the “Project Work Completion Certificate,” the Town will release the loaned funds to the Applicant.

For further information on this program, please contact:

***Economic Development Coordinator – Town of Perth
613-267-3311 ext. 2240 OR ecdev@perth.ca***