

**City of Markham
Commercial Signage Replacement
Grant Program**



**Planning and Urban Design
Heritage Section**

Commercial Signage Replacement Grant Program

1.0 Purpose of the Program

The purpose of this program is to encourage the replacement of inappropriate commercial signage in heritage districts. The current sign by-law supports the development of signage that is considered appropriate for a heritage area in terms of size, placement and form of illumination. However, there are a number of legal, non-conforming signs that have been grandfathered and are permitted to remain. These include illuminated sign boxes with acrylic panels as well as other over-sized or inappropriately located signs which obscure historic architectural features. These types of signs are not complementary to the desired character of the heritage areas.

The objectives of the program include:

- To encourage the improvement of commercial building facades in the heritage districts through the removal of inappropriate signage and its replacement with new signage that implements the Sign By-law in terms of appropriate design, size, placement and form of illumination;
- To provide financial assistance for sign replacement for both heritage and non-heritage buildings in heritage districts in commercial use;
- To promote joint public/private action and investment, which will complement and enhance streetscape and other municipal service improvements being carried out by the City and other groups.

2.0 Eligibility

2.1 Eligible Properties

Commercial properties located in the City's heritage conservation districts and properties Individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act are eligible for the program.

2.2 Eligible Applicants

Owners and tenants of commercial property are eligible to apply for assistance. Tenants are required to provide documentation of the property owner's consent to the signage improvements. Written consent may be either in the form of a lease indicating the lessee's authority for changes to the signage features or written documentation of the property owner's agreement to the proposed rehabilitation.

2.3 Eligibility Requirements

- The subject property must not be in default of any municipal taxes, local improvements or any other money payable to the City (fees or penalties). The property must not be the subject of a contravention, work order or

outstanding municipal requirements (subject to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Development Services). A contravention is defined as “an offence under a municipal by-law, Act or regulation for which enforcement proceedings have been commenced that relates specifically to the building or land for which a grant is sought or given”.

- The replacement signage must first be approved by the City through the City’s Building/Sign Permit process;
- Existing use of property must be in conformity with applicable zoning by-law regulations and other relevant planning controls.
- The inappropriate sign to be replaced must be a legal, non-conforming sign that has been installed in compliance with City by-laws as existed at the time of installation. The removal of illegal signage is to be addressed by By-law Enforcement.
- The property is to be compliance with the City’s Property Standards By-law.

3.0 Grant Information

3.1 Amount of Grant Assistance

The assistance is in the form of a 50/50 matching grant, which is paid upon inspection of the approved signage. The program offers a matching grant for eligible work to a maximum limit of \$1,000 per commercial establishment.

3.2 Completion of Work

Grant commitments are valid for six (6) months and expire if the work is not completed within that time period. This timeframe may be extended at the discretion of the municipality.

4.0 Eligible Work

4.4 Eligible Expenses

Eligible work would include the design component, sign production and sign installation as well as the cost associated with appropriate external forms of illumination. Eligible costs shall be the cost of materials, equipment and contracted labour to complete eligible improvements, as supported by invoices to the satisfaction of the City. Labour provided by the applicant or tenant of the building will not be an eligible costs.

5.0 Application Details

5.1 Application Requirements

1. Application Form

The applicant is required to fill out an application form available from the Planning and Urban Design Department (Markham Civic Centre). The applicant is encouraged to engage a professional designer to provide the necessary drawings.

2. Information to Accompany Application

The application must include all the details necessary for a full understanding of the proposed signage, and is to include:

- a) A professional scaled drawing of the signage
- b) Identification of proposed materials and samples of colours to be used (or a coloured rendering)
- c) Details on the style and placement of external sign illumination.

5.2 Application Process

The Commercial Signage Replacement Grant Program will be administered by Markham's Planning and Urban Design Department. Given the eligible areas are commercial properties in the heritage districts, the Heritage Planning Section will co-ordinate the program.

Step 1. Determine if you are eligible (pre-application consultation)

Prior to submitting a formal application for financial assistance, it is recommended that the following steps be undertaken:

- a) Determine if the property is eligible to receive funding. Contact the Heritage Section.
- b) Discuss the sign proposal with the Zoning Section of the Building Department to determine applicable Sign By-law regulations.
- c) Discuss the proposed sign design with a Heritage Section staff member
- d) Secure a grant application form from the Development Services Counter and complete and return it with the necessary documentation.

This pre-application consultation stage should help to avoid ineligible proposals.

Step 2. Submit an application

Submit a completed application with all required information and materials (See 5.2).

Step 3. Staff Review

Your application will be reviewed to ensure that it meets all the eligibility requirements, including confirmation that no municipal requirements are outstanding. The proposed sign must be in conformity with the technical requirements of the Sign By-law and the design requirements of the heritage conservation district plan for the area. The review of all grant applications will

be undertaken by Heritage Section staff. All applications will be forwarded to Heritage Markham for its consideration and recommendation.

Step 4. Approval by Council

All grants require approval by Council, through the Development Services Committee.

Step 5. Secure permits – install new signage

Nothing contained in the grant application procedures or approval relieves the applicant from obtaining all necessary municipal planning and building department approvals. All work must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and municipal by-laws.

The applicant is required to contact the municipality concerning any changes to the signage project which are proposed during the course of the work.

Step 6. Issuing the Grant

Grants will not be payable until such time as all work has been completed to the satisfaction of the City. When the new signage has been installed, the applicant must submit copies of all paid invoices for approved work as well as photographs of the new signage.

Heritage Section staff will be responsible for the inspection to ensure that the new signage has been completed in accordance with the terms of the application as reviewed by Heritage Markham and approved by Council.

If the cost of the completed work is less than the approved amount, a cheque will be issued for 50% of the new costs.

The City reserves the right to reduce the amount of the grant upon completion of the project where it is of the opinion that unapproved modifications diminish the beneficial effects of the project.

6.0 General Information

6.1 Funding Availability

Funding for this grant program will be considered on an annual basis by Markham Council as part of its overall annual budget process. Individual grants are approved subject to the availability of funding.

6.2 Continuation of the Program

The City, in its sole discretion, may change or discontinue this program at any time.

For further information, please contact:

Heritage Section
Planning and Urban Design Department
City of Markham
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON L3R 9W3

905-477-7000, ext. 2585

heritage@markham.ca

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