

Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation and Intensification Program Guidelines

1.0 Grant Details

The purpose of the Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation and Intensification Grant is to encourage property owners to create one or more new residential dwelling units within and near the Downtown Areas of Brussels and Seaforth through the rehabilitation of an existing residential unit; or the conversion of commercial, residential or mixed-use building space into useable housing unit(s) in the upper-storey or rear floor space of a building.

The program is intended to focus on the Commercial Focus Areas of Brussels and Seaforth and core commercial area, as defined in the Huron East Official Plan (Schedule B). Applications from property owners adjacent to this area will be considered. The Municipality will fund 50% of the total project cost (excluding taxes) up to \$7,000.

2.0 Usage of Funds

The applicant must be the owner of a property zoned for commercial or mixed-use purposes (including C2, C3 C4, C6 zones). Improvements must demonstrate an economic and/or social benefit to the community.

3.0 Eligible Projects for Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation and Intensification Application

Eligible improvements would include:

- Interior renovations with the intent of adding one or more new residential dwelling units within the targeted area through the rehabilitation or renovation of an existing dwelling;
- Upper story space conversion into residential unit(s) secondary to a commercial use;
- Conversion of the rear portion of existing ground floor commercial space for a secondary residential use (must adhere to Huron East's Zoning By-Law);
- Professional fees to study the feasibility of conversion from commercial to residential use; and
- Professional services (e.g. architect, engineer) to assist with the project's design.

Improvements not eligible through program include:

- Internal renovations that do not result in the creation of a new residential unit.
- New building construction.

4.0 Eligible Items for Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation and Intensification Application may include:

Structural Improvements such as improvements to:

- Floor Joists
- Ceiling Joists
- Rafters/Trusses
- Walls
- Main Beams

Life Safety Improvements such as improvements to:

- Exit signage
- Emergency lighting
- Fire/CO2 Alarms
- Extinguishers
- Firewall Separation
- Fire Doors
- Sprinklers
- Siamese Connection
- Removal of hazardous material; such as, asbestos

Usable and Efficient Floor Space improvements:

- Increase ceiling height
- Architectural restoration/retention
- Extension/upgrading of plumbing, electrical, HVAC services
- Permanent finishing materials and permanent decorative elements, including painting, drywall, trim, permanent light fixtures, flooring, countertops and cabinetry

Energy Efficiency:

- Repair/replacement of roofing, windows and doors
- Low flow fixtures

Other improvements may be eligible if they provide economic and social benefit to the community.

5.0 Items that are ineligible for Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation and Intensification Funding

- Non-permanent or moveable components, such as appliances, furnishings, interior signage and non-emergency light fixtures

6.0 Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicants must be a property owner of a property zoned for commercial or mixed-use (including C2, C3 C4 & C6 zones) within the Community Improvement Project Area.
2. Applicant must complete a pre-consultation with the Community Improvement Program Administrator prior to submitting an application.
3. Only grant applications that comply with municipal by-laws will be considered.
4. Improvement projects within Commercial Focus Areas will be prioritized.
5. Applicants may be eligible for one Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation and Intensification grant per property.
6. The subject property shall not be in a position of tax arrears and not have any outstanding orders or non-conformity with zoning.
7. Outstanding work orders (building, fire, zoning, etc.) must be satisfied prior to grant approval.
8. Improvements to buildings that are designated under Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act must be approved by the Huron East Heritage Committee.

9. Projects may require a Building Permit. Permits must be issued before the project commences. Applicants that have commenced work prior to obtaining a Building Permit, acknowledge that their project may be deemed ineligible for funding. Approval of a grant will not guarantee that a Building Permit will be issued.
10. Improvements requiring a variance will not be considered unless unique circumstances (not caused or created by the applicant) exist.
11. Projects should not have commenced prior to the awarding of the requested grant. Applicants that have commenced work prior to obtaining approval for the requested grant, acknowledge that their project may be deemed ineligible for funding.
12. Projects must be completed by the approved deadline. Extensions are not granted unless prior approval has been received.
13. Applicants must provide a minimum 50% cash contribution towards the total cost of the project for which they are applying for a grant.
14. Taxes are the full responsibility of the applicants.
15. Eligible project costs must be actual cash outlay to third parties acting at arms' length and which can be documented through original invoices or proofs of payment. An exception may be granted for a property owner that wishes to do the work themselves; however, eligible project costs may only include material costs and not labour.

7.0 Review Criteria

The Municipality of Huron East Improvement Program Committee will review applications against the following criteria:

- date/timing of the application

- balance of funding available and any previous applications made at the time of application
- project's potential to provide long term economic benefit to the Municipality
- evidence of the applicant's ability to fulfill responsibilities related to the project installation and maintenance
- project's location in relation to the Commercial Focus Areas
- project's "fit" with the objectives of the Community Improvement Plan
- project's "fit" with the character of the building and its' surroundings

8.0 Application Process

Applicants must complete an application in order to be given grant consideration. Incomplete applications cannot be accepted. If approved, funds will be allocated following completion of project and proof of eligible expenditures.

Applications require the following:

- Property owner name
- Contact information
- Detailed project description including colours/materials that will be used
- Sketches, rendering and/or pictures of proposed project (must include "before" photo)
- The proposed timeline for the work (start date, completion date)
- Quote(s) of the project cost
- Proposed project costs (taxes not included)

- Grant request

Applications to this Program are available at the Huron East Municipal Office or online on the Municipality's website: <https://www.huroneast.com>.