

The Business Beautification Pilot Program (BBPP): Eligibility & Scoring Guide

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for the program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Location:** All commercially-zoned properties within the Town of Atikokan. Eligible funding is limited to improvements made to the property itself. Off-site improvements or advertising, including highway signage advertising a business located within the Town, are not eligible.
- **Timing:** Work started or completed prior to written approval by AEDC is **ineligible for funding**. For reimbursement from the 2026 program budget, eligible work must be completed and paid for, and all reimbursement documentation must be submitted to AEDC, no later than December 15, 2026. Reimbursement may be requested for eligible portions of an approved project completed and paid for by this deadline, even where the overall project continues beyond December 15, 2026. Any reimbursement claim submitted in 2027 will be subject to Council approving funding through the 2027 Municipal Budget.

How to Apply

1. **Consultation:** Contact the AEDC Team to discuss your project ideas and confirm potential eligibility.
2. **Review Policy:** Once cleared by staff, review the full **BBPP Policy**.
3. **Submit Application:** Complete the electronic online application.
4. **Required Documents:** You must provide:
 - o At least **two quotes** for the proposed work.
 - o **Photos** of the area needing attention.
 - o A **detailed description** of the work and how it contributes to community improvement for consideration of the request.

Approval & Reimbursement Process

- **Internal Review:** AEDC staff review the application for completeness and make a decision on the request.
- **Conditional Approval:** Successful applicants receive an electronic letter detailing the approved funding amount.
- **Project Window:** Eligible portions of approved project may be submitted for reimbursement as they are completed and paid for. For reimbursement from the 2026 program budget, eligible work must be completed and paid for and all reimbursement documentation submitted no later than December 15, 2026.
- **Payment:** Applicants are responsible for paying all costs associated with the eligible work for which reimbursement is being requested before submitting a reimbursement claim.

- **Inspection:** AEDC staff will inspect and document the completed eligible work for which reimbursement is being requested, including taking photographs and securing testimonials where appropriate.
- **Fund Release:** Applicants must submit proof of payment and supporting documentation to AEDC. Reimbursement will be based on eligible costs actually incurred and paid, up to 50% of eligible costs and to a maximum cumulative grant of \$5,000 per property/project.
- **Any disbursement of funds for the project shall be conditional upon the Town receives from AEDC:**
 - Copies of all submitted applications;
 - Documentation of approvals;
 - Copies of all invoices supporting completed work;
- **2027 Claims:** Any reimbursement claim submitted in 2027 will be subject to Council approving funding through the 2027 Municipal Budget.

Participation in this program does not exempt the applicant from obtaining any required building permits, sign permits, encroachment permits, planning approvals, or any other approvals required by the Town or other applicable authorities.

Approval of funding under this program **does not constitute municipal approval** of any proposed work that require municipal approval.

No approval under this program authorizes the occupation or alteration of municipal property or the public right-of-way. Any proposed work or feature affecting a municipal sidewalk, boulevard, or other public right-of-way requires prior approval from the Town.

Scoring Matrix

Applications are scored out of 100 based on the following weighted criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Weight
Community Impact	Visual appeal, vibrancy, and economic attractiveness of the area.	/25
Visual Enhancement	Extent of facade, signage, lighting, or architectural improvements.	/25
Project Readiness	Quality of quotes and feasibility of completing eligible work within the applicable program deadline.	/20
Economic Benefit	Potential to increase business activity, tourism, or pedestrian traffic.	/10
Leveraging Investment	Additional financial contributions or stacking with other programs.	/5
Property Need	Visible deterioration or obsolescence of the current property.	/5
Streetscape	Use of optional design features that complement the	/10

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Weight
Contribution	building and surrounding streetscape, improve pedestrian visibility and evening appeal.	

Suggested Design Enhancements

The following examples are provided as optional design guidance. Applicants are not required to incorporate any specific feature or design style.

Projects may receive additional consideration where proposed improvements complement the building and surrounding streetscape, enhance pedestrian visibility and evening appearance, and remain practical for Atikokan's climate, accessibility requirements, property maintenance, and winter snow-removal operations.

Any feature proposed within a municipal sidewalk, boulevard, or public right-of-way requires prior approval from the Town. No approval under this program authorizes the occupation or alteration of municipal property or the public right-of-way.

1. Perpendicular, Blade, or Projecting Signs

Signs installed perpendicular to the building facade are generally more visible to pedestrians travelling along the street than signs mounted flat against the building.

Recommended considerations include:

- an appropriate pedestrian-oriented scale;
- simple and legible wording;
- a durable metal, wood, or similarly appropriate mounting bracket;
- dimensions and placement that complement the proportions of the building facade;
- adequate clearance above pedestrian areas; and
- subtle, downward-directed illumination that complements the facade without creating glare or excessive brightness.

2. Gooseneck or Downward-Directed Facade Lighting

Gooseneck or similar downward-directed fixtures may be used to illuminate a business sign, entrance, storefront display, or architectural feature.

Recommended considerations include:

- warm-colour LED lighting;
- light directed downward toward the facade, entrance, or area immediately adjacent to the storefront;
- fixtures that complement the architectural character of the building;

- a consistent fixture style on the same building;
- appropriate shielding to prevent light from shining into neighbouring properties or toward vehicle traffic; and
- avoidance of flashing, animated, or excessively bright lighting.

Facade lighting should complement, rather than replace, municipal street and pedestrian lighting.

3. Large Movable Seasonal Planters

Large movable planters containing flowers, decorative grasses, shrubs, or compact trees can improve the appearance of a storefront and contribute to a more welcoming pedestrian environment.

Recommended considerations include:

- sufficient weight and stability to withstand local weather and wind conditions;
- placement that maintains a clear and accessible pedestrian route;
- location on private property or within another approved area;
- positioning that does not interfere with entrances, sightlines, parking, drainage, municipal infrastructure, or snow-removal operations;
- the ability to relocate or remove the planter before the winter maintenance season;
- durable construction suitable for repeated seasonal use;
- a style and scale that complement the building facade; and
- the potential for winter use with evergreen branches or other seasonal arrangements.

Any planter, display, furnishing, or similar item proposed within a municipal sidewalk, boulevard, or other public right-of-way requires prior approval from the Town and may be determined to be ineligible for funding under this program. No approval under this program authorizes the occupation or alteration of municipal property or the public right-of-way.

4. Hanging Baskets and Window Planters

Hanging baskets and window planters may be appropriate for buildings where there is insufficient space for ground-level planters.

Recommended considerations include:

- secure installation using durable mounting hardware;
- placement that does not obstruct pedestrian movement, entrances, windows, signage, or accessibility;
- adequate clearance above pedestrian areas;
- reasonable access for watering and maintenance;

- proportions that complement the size of the window and building facade; and
- removal before winter where necessary for safety, maintenance, or protection from snow and ice.

5. Coordinated Facade Colour Palette

Applicants are not required to use any prescribed colour or standardized colour scheme. The following voluntary principles are intended only to support a visually coordinated facade:

- selecting two or three compatible principal colours;
- using one primary colour for the main facade;
- using complementary colours for doors, window frames, trim, and architectural details;
- coordinating painted surfaces with existing brick, stone, wood, or other building materials;
- considering the appearance of neighbouring buildings without copying them; and
- avoiding an excessive number of unrelated or competing bright colours.

The objective is not uniformity between businesses, but a balanced and intentional appearance.

6. Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies can improve storefront appearance, provide weather protection, and create a more welcoming pedestrian-scale entrance.

They may also incorporate a business name or logo where permitted under applicable signage requirements.

Recommended considerations include:

- dimensions that correspond to the width and proportions of the window or entrance;
- placement that does not conceal significant architectural features;
- coordination between multiple awnings or canopies installed on the same building;
- adequate height and clearance above pedestrian areas;
- appropriate drainage of rain, melting snow, and ice;
- durable materials suitable for local weather conditions; and
- colours and materials that complement the building facade and business signage.

Any canopy, awning, or similar feature projecting over municipal property or the public right-of-way must receive prior approval from the Town and comply with all applicable

municipal requirements. Approval under this program does not constitute approval to occupy or project over municipal property or the public right-of-way.

7. Welcoming Entrance Improvements

Entrance improvements can make a business more visible, accessible, and inviting.

Eligible or recommended improvements may include:

- installation, repair, refinishing, or replacement of an exterior entrance door;
- a coordinated door colour or finish;
- lighting installed beside or above the entrance;
- a clear and professionally presented sign displaying business hours;
- replacement of worn handles, hardware, or entrance fixtures;
- slip-resistant entrance surfaces;
- improved visibility of steps, level changes, or glass doors;
- removal or reduction of minor entrance barriers where technically feasible;
- improved weather protection; and
- other small-scale accessibility improvements that comply with applicable building and accessibility requirements.

Score Interpretation

- **90–100:** Exceptional project; strong candidate for full funding.
- **75–89:** High-quality project; recommended for funding.
- **60–74:** Eligible project; funding depends on budget availability.
- **Below 60:** Does not sufficiently meet program objectives.