Section 1-1. Purpose

The City of Victoria’s mission for the Building Improvement Grant (B.I.G. Grant) is to provide support for transformational projects that are necessary to protect, enhance, and preserve landmarks of historical importance and significance as well as to promote the economic, cultural, educational, and general welfare of the public.

The Building Improvement Grant is to provide financial assistance to commercial property owners, eligible businesses, and developers located within the boundaries of the Victoria Main Street Program to renovate existing buildings for expansion and site activation. This program is intended to:

a) Provide financial assistance to enhance and/or activate a vacant or occupied building developing the building into residential space, retail, restaurant, night life venue or mixed-use.

b) Stabilize and improve property values.

c) Promote development of ADA compliant structures/fixtures in historic buildings.

d) Strengthen the economy of the City by protecting and enhancing the City’s attractiveness to residents and visitors, as well as provide support and stimulus to business.

e) Meet 2021 Downtown Master Plan goal: Downtown will have a dedicated and sustainable incentive program to encourage development and redevelopment in the area.

In order to facilitate the preservation of downtown, the City of Victoria is offering incentives that will improve existing properties and businesses within the Downtown Business District and Victoria Main Street Program District.

Section 1-2. Administration

The program is administered by the City of Victoria Main Street Program. Funding is provided by the Victoria Sales Tax Corporation who also reserves the right for final approval of all qualified applications.
Section 1-3. Eligibility Criteria

All of the following eligibility criteria must be met:

a) Eligible property must be within the Main Street Program. See attached map.

b) Applicants must agree to maintain the subject building in good repair for five years from the completion of the project. Applicants must agree not to change or alter property improvements funded through the Building Improvement Grant program for a minimum period of three years from the date of the final reimbursement check.

c) Property must be deeded to the applicant or tenant-occupied. In the case of a tenant-occupied structure, the applicant must have the owner’s consent. If leasing, the participant/applicant must

1. have written approval for participation in the program from the property owner,
2. have at least two years remaining on the lease and be in good legal and financial standing with the property owner. The participant/applicant must not have any major actual or pending criminal claims or bankruptcy filings.

d) All taxes and other government fees and assessments must be current on the property.

e) Property cannot be subject to an Order for Demolition.

f) Applicant must complete Design Review Team consultation and approval prior to entering into a contract with the City of Victoria.

g) Projects from applicants seeking funds must meet all objectives of the B.I.G. Grant.

h) Eligible Expenditures (mostly or exclusively interior)
1. Projects associated with bringing a building up to code.
2. Projects associated with bringing building into ADA compliance.
3. Projects associated with fire suppression or alarm systems.
5. Hazardous material or underground tank mitigation/removal (examples: Lead based paint remediation, asbestos survey, asbestos removal, etc.).
6. Structural repairs to improve safety and integrity of structures and/or fixtures intended for pedestrian traffic.
7. Ventilation system repair, replacement, installation including duct work, vent hoods, etc. to bring system up to code or meet fire regulations.
8. Major leveling or repair of catastrophic foundation repair.
9. Architectural and engineering fees related to eligible expenses.
10. Projects associated with converting commercial properties into mixed-use properties.

11. HVAC installation and repair based on the following:
   a. Installation of a new system where a unit did not prior exist.
   b. Replacement of a new, larger system in order to change the use of the building as assessed by a licensed engineer.

i) Ineligible Expenditures (mostly or exclusively interior)
   1. Appliances
   2. Capital equipment purchases
   3. Cleaning (minor)
   4. Decorative treatments
   5. Furniture
   6. Government fees
   7. Incompatible new construction
   8. Legal, financing, leasing, rental and other administrative and financing expenses
   9. Maintenance activities
   10. Owner and/or/tenant labor
   11. Paint, floor, wall, window or ceiling treatments
   12. Repair tools and equipment
   13. Security Systems
   14. Taxes
   15. Wall construction and partitions
   16. Other (as determined on a case-by-case basis)

j) Entities that are ineligible to receive funds include:
   1. Tax-exempt organizations (i.e. charitable organizations, churches or religious organizations, private foundations, nonprofit organizations, etc.)
   2. Taxing Entities (i.e. Victoria County, Victoria County Junior College District, Navigation District, Victoria Independent School District.)

Section 1-4. Grant Assistance

a) Program assistance is available for two different types of projects:

1) Building Restoration – As listed in Section 1-3. Grants are available with a cap of $50,000. (For example: Applicant must provide a $50,000.00 dollar match if awarded the cap amount of $50,000.00 thus making it a total cost of $100,000.00).

2) The Building Improvements Grant administrators reserve the right to issue a grant greater than $50,000 but no greater than $100,000 on a case-by-case basis dependent on how great the economic impact will be to the downtown business district and the Main Street Program district. Applicants requesting more than $50,000 may be required to present their request and project scope to the Victoria Sales Tax Development Corporation (VSTDC) for final approval.
3) Other improvements may be allowed on a case-by-case basis that are necessary to stabilize a structure, improve energy efficiencies and/or meet building code requirements.

b) Grants are provided on a 50/50 matching basis up to the maximum grant amount.

c) Grants will not be provided for work that is already completed.

d) The maximum grant assistance available per property is limited to available funds as established by the Victoria Sales Tax Development Corporation.

e) The grant is set up as a single payment reimbursement to the applicant upon completion of the project.

Section 1-5. Grant Application Procedure

a) At the start of the fiscal year (October 1st), the City will publish an announcement of funding availability and hold a Building Improvement Grant workshop.

b) If funds are still available after the initial application period, grants will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis until total funds are depleted.

c) Property owner submits an application along with any required supporting documentation (i.e. drawings, photographs, contractor bids, tax certificate, etc.). Application will be reviewed by Victoria Main Street Program Manager, Development Services Director, Development Services Building Official, Economic Development Director, and Fire Marshall Staff to determine if the project qualifies for funding under the B.I.G. Grant.

d) After submittal of a grant application, a preliminary site visit will be made by Victoria Main Street Program Manager and Development Services staff. The site will be photographed, and repairs/maintenance reviewed with the property owner. Applicant must obtain approval from the Design Review Team before they are able to proceed with the grant process.

e) After all above requirements have been satisfied to determine the eligibility of the grant proposal, the completed application will be submitted to Victoria Sales Tax Development Corporation (VSTDC) for final approval before contract execution. Note, the VSTDC meets regularly on the last Monday of every month.

f) Property owner and City will execute a contract outlining the scope of work eligible for reimbursement.

g) Work must be completed within one year from the date of the contract.
h) Grants will be set up as a single payment reimbursement to the applicant upon completion of the project. Applicant must provide all necessary paid receipts/invoices in order to receive payment.

i) If at any time problems occur relating to the quality of work or work is not completed in accordance with the specifications outlined in the application and approval cannot be granted, the contract can be terminated, and the City will have no further obligation to the owner.

j) In the event that funds for the fiscal year are exhausted, all remaining applicants not awarded funds for that fiscal year will be required to re-apply under the most current guidelines available in the new fiscal year after funds have been replenished.
Main Street Boundary Map