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## DOWNTOWN VIBRANCY STRATEGY

The Downtown Vibrancy Strategy is built upon a commitment of collaboration and partnership with businesses and organizations that have a vested interest in downtown Edmonton. This agile approach to supporting vibrancy in the heart of our city focuses on four pillars - Downtown as a Home, Economic Hub, Destination, Safe & Welcoming place – to achieve its goals. Strategy details are available at [edmonton.ca/downtown](http://edmonton.ca/downtown).

The Downtown Vibrancy Fund provides financial support to projects led by businesses and organizations that support achieving the outcomes in the Strategy. Priority is given to projects that demonstrate a long term and sustained impact.

Applications are currently being accepted for the Downtown Vibrancy Fund, and funding is focused on supporting projects that add Recreational Amenities, Decorative Lighting or Public Art & Placemaking to downtown.

If your business or organization has a project that does not fit the specific criteria of Streams 1, 2 & 4, you can submit an application to Stream 5: Other Projects.

Sample applications for all streams are available starting on page 9.

**\*\*Please note that funding is not guaranteed,  
even if your project meets all eligibility requirements.**

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & EVALUATION PROCESS

Businesses and organizations of all sizes are eligible to apply.

There is no maximum number of applications permitted by an individual business or organization. There is no limit to the amount of funding provided to an individual business or organization. Businesses and organizations must meet ALL of the following criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the Fund:

- Project must occur within downtown Edmonton as defined by this [map](#). The business/organization does not need to be located within this [map](#).
- Project must align with one or more of the four pillars listed above (more information [here](#))
- Must have a valid business licence or a valid exemption
- Project costs must be incurred after the date your application is submitted

- Project must be completed by the end of 2025 or receive an exemption in writing
- Project can involve multiple locations and/or dates
- Project is submitted to one of the following funding streams:
  - [Stream 1: Recreational Amenities](#)
  - [Stream 2: Decorative Lighting](#)
  - [Stream 3: Downtown Events \(Applications are now closed\)](#)
  - [Stream 4: Public Art and Placemaking](#)
  - [Stream 5: Other Projects](#)

### INELIGIBLE COSTS FOR ALL FUNDING STREAMS

The following costs are not eligible for funding under any of the Downtown Vibrancy Fund Streams (note this is not an exhaustive list and the Program Manager reserves the right to identify additional costs that may be ineligible):

- Salaries and expenses of existing staff (hired contract work could be eligible)
- Office and administration fees
- Mortgages, bills, interest, debt servicing
- Utilities, rent, fees for memberships or professional associations
- Storage, takedown and maintenance fees related to the project
- Other costs at the discretion of the Program Manager
- Cost contingency

### EVALUATION PROCESS FOR ALL FUNDING STREAMS

- Applications will be accepted and reviewed as follows:

<b>Submission Date of Application</b>	<b>Applicants Receive a Decision on the Applications</b>
May 11 - June 14, 2024	by July 15, 2024
June 15 - July 14, 2024	by August 15, 2024
July 15 - August 14, 2024	by September 15, 2024
August 15 - September 14, 2024	by October 15, 2024
September 15 - October 14, 2024	by November 15, 2024

- Projects will be evaluated against the eligibility criteria for the particular stream which they have applied for.
- Evaluations will be conducted by the Core Partners Committee which includes City administration and representatives from organizations with a vested interest in the future of downtown. These organizations' mandates strongly align with the Strategy's four pillars as they represent and/or work directly with a wide variety of downtown businesses, organizations and residents. The Committee brings a unique perspective and skill set to their evaluation, based on their experience, knowledge and insights. Those organizations include:

- Downtown Edmonton Community League
- Edmonton Downtown Business Association
- Explore Edmonton
- NAIOP (Commercial Real Estate Development Association)

Funding decisions made by the Committee are final and cannot be appealed. The City of Edmonton reserves the right to consider exceptions, including the maximum amount of eligible funding per stream, based on exceptional circumstances and make changes to the program at the discretion of the Director, Downtown Vibrancy, and Safe City. The Director, Downtown Vibrancy and Safe City has the sole authority, in their sole and unfettered discretion, to determine the eligibility of applications for the Downtown Vibrancy Fund.

**\*\*Please note that funding is not guaranteed,  
even if your project meets all eligibility requirements.**

## **APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ALL FUNDING STREAMS**

Once you are ready to apply, complete the [online application form](#).

## **POST-PROJECT REPORTING**

A final report must be submitted as outlined in the funding agreement which will be signed by all successful applicants.

## **QUESTIONS?**

For any questions related to this Program Guide, please contact [downtown@edmonton.ca](mailto:downtown@edmonton.ca)

## **STREAM 1: RECREATIONAL AMENITIES**

**Available Funding:** Up to \$250,000 per project, requires a 50% investment from the applicant.

**Funding Stream Overview:** Recreational amenities are anything that provides sport, recreational or leisure opportunities for members of the public on public or private land, inside or outside. Examples would include but are not limited to: basketball, pickleball or tennis courts, playgrounds, parks, climbing walls, exercise equipment, skate parks, inclusive recreational opportunities and emerging sport.

This stream requires a 50% financial investment from the applicant (can include other grant funding) in order to be eligible for funding. Note that funding for the Recreational Amenity stream will be disbursed only upon project completion. There will be no progress payments.

### **1. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Recreational Amenity Stream**

- a. Projects must be planned for publicly accessible areas (inside/outside).
- b. Renderings of the proposed project must be supplied with your application.  
Renderings can be in draft form and do not need to be professionally done, but do need to provide visual context for the project.
- c. Any required approvals or permits must be in place and are the responsibility of the applicant.
- d. The project must be new; funding will not apply for projects already in place.
- e. The project can provide access to the amenity for free or charge a user fee.
- f. Maintenance and operational costs for up to 3 years are eligible, however cannot exceed 15% of the total project cost.

### **2. Eligible Costs for Recreational Amenity Stream**

- a. Purchase of recreational equipment
- b. Construction costs directly related to the install of the amenity
- c. Design
- d. Permits
- e. Initial installation costs

### **3. [Application Process](#)**

## **STREAM 2: DECORATIVE LIGHTING**

**Available Funding:** Up to \$250,000 per project, requires a 50% investment from the applicant.

**Funding Stream Overview:** This focuses on projects on private property that improve publicly accessible areas indoors or outdoors. Projects that will be considered can include (but are not limited to) decorative string lighting, uplighting/downlighting, coloured lighting, programmable building facade lighting etc. Projects will be evaluated based on their creativity, longevity and placemaking capabilities (ie: does the new lighting make your location a destination?)

This stream requires a 50% investment from the applicant in order to be eligible for funding. Note that funding for Decorative Lighting projects will be disbursed only upon project completion. There will be no progress payments.

### **1. Eligibility Criteria for Lighting Stream**

- a. Lighting projects must be planned for publicly accessible areas (inside/outside).
- b. Lighting must be year-round (holiday/seasonal lighting projects will not be considered).
- c. Renderings of the proposed lighting project must be supplied with your application.
- d. Lighting projects must be decorative in nature (security lighting projects will not be considered).
- e. Any required building permits must be in place and are the responsibility of the applicant.
- f. The lighting must be new; funding will not apply for existing projects already in place.

### **2. Eligible Costs for Lighting Stream**

- a. Purchase of new lighting or lighting software
- b. Electrical upgrades
- c. Initial installation costs

### **3. [Application Process](#)**

## **STREAM 3: DOWNTOWN EVENTS**

**Applications for this stream are now closed.**

## **STREAM 4: PUBLIC ART & PLACEMAKING**

**Available Funding:** Up to \$100,000 per project, requires a 50% investment from the applicant.

**Funding Stream Overview:** Public art can be any medium of artwork displayed within public space or publicly accessible private property. Examples include but are not limited to murals, sculptures, art installations, decorative banners, etc. Placemaking refers to projects in public space that animate, activate and/or improve the appearance. Examples include but are not limited to street furniture, creative lighting, etc.

Creativity and outside-the-box thinking is encouraged! Projects should contribute to the overall vibrancy of downtown in any of the following ways<sup>1</sup>:

1. Unifying themes or characteristics in downtown public spaces.
2. Placemaking: creating focal points, or adding value to existing sites.
3. Encouraging pedestrians to explore downtown spaces outside of the immediate pedestrian realm.
4. Helping to navigate the core or define key downtown locations.
5. Embellish or add value to functional elements (ex: art installation is also a bench)
6. Creating a destination: the new public art should be something that visitors would make a point of coming downtown to see in person.
7. Funds cannot also be provided by the City of Edmonton Community Mural Grant.

This stream requires a 50% investment from the applicant in order to be eligible for funding. Eligible costs include those associated with both the design process and project installation. Successful applicants shall receive the City funding in one installment within a reasonable time after the parties have fully executed their funding agreement.

### **1. Eligibility Criteria for Public Art Stream**

- a. Projects must be planned for publicly accessible areas (inside/outside).

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<sup>1</sup> [Downtown Public Art Guide and Initiatives - June 2022](#)

- b. Renderings of the proposed project must be supplied with your application. Renderings can be in draft form and do not need to be professionally done, but do need to provide visual context for the project. A portfolio of previous work would be helpful and can be shared if applicable.
- c. Any required approvals or permits must be in place and are the responsibility of the applicant.
- d. The project must be new; funding will not apply for art projects already in progress.
- e. The design theme must be appropriate for all members of the public. The City reserves the right to deny requests that do not merit public support or are mainly personal, private, political, polarizing or commercial in nature. Note that advertising, political messages or content deemed as offensive or hateful will not be accepted for grant funding.

## 2. Eligible Costs

- a. Material costs
- b. Installation
- c. Artist fees (local or international)

## 3. [Application Process](#)

# STREAM 5: OTHER PROJECTS

**Available Funding:** There is no minimum or maximum funding amount per project and this stream does not require an investment from the applicant.

**Funding Stream Overview:** Any business or organization can submit an application for a project that does not fit the specific criteria of Streams 1, 2 & 4. If you have questions related to this stream, please contact [downtown@edmonton.ca](mailto:downtown@edmonton.ca).

## 1. Eligibility Criteria

- a. ALL of the eligibility criteria found on pages 2 and 3 must be met in order to be eligible to apply

## 2. Eligible Costs

- a. Materials
- b. Installation / Construction
- c. Design



d. Associated Permits

### 3. [Application Process](#)

## SAMPLE APPLICATIONS

The following attachments will give you a preview of the different sections of the application, depending on which stream you apply for.

Submit all applications electronically, through this [link](#).

### Section I: General Information

- [General Information](#)

### Section II:

- [Stream 1: Recreational Amenities](#)
- [Stream 2: Decorative Lighting](#)
- ~~Stream 3: Downtown Events~~: **CLOSED for the remainder of 2024**
- [Stream 4: Public Art](#)
- [Stream 5: Other](#)

### Section III:

- [Applicant Declaration](#)

*The City of Edmonton is committed to respect and inclusivity and welcomes all applicants with diverse expertise, experience and perspectives.*