

CBD Amenity Improvement Fund

Background:

The Transforming Taitoko/Levin Town Centre Strategy identified Oxford Street as Levin's primary urban asset. Through the public engagement process, both business owners and the wider community expressed a view that some buildings and verandahs in the Levin town centre have become 'tired' and rundown. In addition, it is acknowledged that signage dominates the streetscape with many businesses having multiple large signs in one or more of the following locations:

- Fascia boards (signs are often larger than the fascia board);
- Freestanding footpath signs;
- Above verandah signs;
- Very large signs in shop windows, which obscure sightlines between shops and the street.

These characteristics detract from the overall experience of the town centre. Having fewer, clearer signs assists not only the advertiser by allowing their sign to be 'heard', but also enhances the appearance of the building and the overall quality of the streetscape.

Purpose:

The purpose of this fund is to improve the appearance of the Levin town centre through enhancing the appearance of buildings (through repainting and adding design details), repairing verandahs, and reducing the level of signage. This will help to reduce visual clutter, improve perceptions of quality in the town centre, and make the town centre a more attractive place to spend time.

Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply to the fund the applicant must:

- Own a building or a business* in the Commercial Zone area of the Levin town centre (priority will be given to the most central commercial area between Bath Street and Stanley Street);
- If structural changes are being made to the building or verandah, the building must have been assessed as being 34% NBS or better;
- If the proposal relates to non-structural changes (e.g. signage or paint and decorative features), the building and/or verandah does not need to be 34% NBS or better;
- The changes proposed must be consistent with the **Horowhenua District Council CBD Signage and Building Design Policy**.

**if the business owner is the applicant, written agreement from the building owner will be required as part of the application).*

The maximum funding from Council for 2019 is:

Frontage/Verandah Improvements

- 50% of the value of the project up to a total of \$5,000

Signage

- 75% of the value of the project up to a total of \$1,000 for signage replacement, with the remainder to be contributed by the applicant.

There will be an absolute cap available per year of \$50,000, after which point no additional funding will be allocated during that year.

The fund will initially be available for two years.

Covered by the Fund:

- Costs associated with replacing signage, repairing or replacing verandahs, and upgrading building frontages.

Conditions:

Information Requirements

Information to be submitted with application:

1. Completed application form;
2. Plans showing proposed signage, building frontage (including paint colours), and verandah;
3. Description of how the proposed plans align with the **Horowhenua District Council CBD Signage and Building Design Policy**;
4. Timeframe for completion of work;
5. Any necessary building or resource consents;
6. Copy of NBS assessment, if structural changes are proposed;
7. Quotes detailing the cost of the project;
8. Details of applicants' contribution to the project (financial, labour).

A single application can be made for a group of adjoining buildings. Preference will be given to applications for a group of buildings to be upgraded at one time (or for a building adjoined by building/s that have already been upgraded), as this will have a greater positive impact on the streetscape.

Funding Release

1. Funding will be released at the completion of the work subject to:
 - Confirmation that the work has been completed in accordance with all relevant conditions;
 - Authentication of expenditure (i.e. identification of what work has been carried out, by whom and at what cost) - originals of all invoices are to be provided;
 - Proof that the applicant has obtained and complied with all statutory consents (i.e. resource consents, building consents).

Progress Reports

1. The applicant is required to provide brief progress reports on request.

Review/Revocation

1. Financial assistance may be reviewed or revoked in the following circumstances:
 - Unsatisfactory work;
 - Unsatisfactory progress;
 - Non-disclosure, misleading or false disclosure of information.

Appropriate Work and Financial Management

1. All work must be carried out in a manner consistent with the **Horowhenua District Council CBD Signage and Building Design Policy** and in accordance with generally accepted sound financial practice.

Ongoing Protection

1. The exterior of the building, verandah, and signage may not be altered without prior approval from Council except in the following circumstances:
 - Replacing like with like (e.g. repainting in the same/similar colour);
 - Temporary or emergency works;
 - Installation of temporary festive displays (e.g. Christmas displays).

Acknowledgement of Assistance

1. If requested, the assistance made by Council shall be acknowledged

Special Conditions

1. In some instances, additional conditions may be imposed to achieve the purpose of this fund.

Allocating the Fund:

The fund will be open for applications for two months.

If all eligibility criteria (above) are met, Council will contribute up to 50% of the cost of the project, up to the values listed below per building until the fund has been exhausted for the year.

Frontage/Verandah Improvements

- 50% of the value of the project up to a total of \$5,000, with the remainder to be contributed by the applicant.

Signage

- 75% of the value of the project up to a total of \$1,000 for signage replacement, with the remainder to be contributed by the applicant.

Process:

1. Applicant prepares application, including plans, in accordance with the requirement of this fund, including ensuring consistency with the **Horowhenua District Council CBD Signage and Building Design Policy**. It is recommended the applicant submit draft plans for comment prior to lodging the application.
2. Council officer will assess the application and determine the grant payable. This will occur within 1 month of the application period closing (i.e. end of June 2019). Council may obtain independent design advice in assessing the application.
3. The funding will be paid once all works have been completed and the applicant has provided authentication of expenditure.