

# City Centre Incentive Program Guide

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GRANTS

June 2025

CITY OF REGINA | CITY REVITALIZATION

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# A. Program Intent

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## Purpose

- 1 The City Centre Incentive Program is intended to provide financial incentives to encourage private investment towards economic growth, fostering vibrancy and infill in priority areas within the City Centre.
- 2 Objectives of the City Centre Incentive Program are to:
  - (a) stimulate building activity and help improve existing buildings with aesthetic improvements to attract new businesses to vacant spaces,
  - (b) encourage diversification of land uses,
  - (c) introduce new features and amenities that create interest and vibrancy, helping bring more people to the established areas of the city to live, work, invest and visit, and
  - (d) catalyze future private commercial investment in the City Centre.

## Scope

- 3 This guideline applies to commercial development projects on existing buildings within the City Centre.

## Guiding Principles

- 4 As part of the overall program eligibility, projects that meet the objectives intended under each stream will be prioritized based on the scorecard evaluation. The objectives and key scorecard principles for each stream are as follows:

### Storefront Improvements (SFI) Stream

#### *Objectives*

- Encourage private investment in building façades and storefronts to improve the quality of the public realm.
- Assist property owners with attracting business tenants and visitors.

#### *Scorecard Principles*

Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance the pedestrian experience with people-focused design features</li><li>• Create a visually appealing, interactive &amp; engaging space</li><li>• Promote year-round use, function and design</li></ul>
Safety, Transparency & Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage changes that allow properties to be universally accessible</li><li>• Promote "eyes on the street" and a sense of safety</li><li>• Enhance transparency of business operations through exterior design</li></ul>
Quality Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that proposed designs consider community context</li><li>• Incorporate best practices in urban design</li><li>• Encourage participation of qualified professionals to help lead the process</li></ul>

### Tenant Fit-up Stream Objective

#### *Objectives:*

- Encourage reactivation of vacant buildings and units.
- Assist with the conversion of existing floor space to other land uses to attract new tenants.
- Support capital costs for new businesses, arts and culture organizations and unique ventures to update existing buildings and spaces to meet their needs.

#### *Scorecard Principles*

Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversify land uses within the City Centre</li><li>• Increase land uses that have the potential to attract a wide range of audiences and activities and foster overall vibrancy</li></ul>
Business Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage active land uses to be located where accessible to the general public at or near street level</li><li>• Support new ventures that provide in-house spaces or services that encourage people to "stay and play"</li><li>• Promote business activity that will be available beyond typical work week hours</li></ul>
Quality Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage participation of qualified professionals to help lead the process</li><li>• Encourage interior unit design that provides additional amenities for a broad range of users and needs</li></ul>

## B. Glossary of Terms

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5 The following definitions apply to this program:

- (a) **Actual eligible costs** mean the total value of actual eligible project costs incurred by an applicant based on invoices and other documentation submitted by an applicant after the completion of a project.
- (b) **Applicant** means the property owner, a tenant or a designate with consent by the property owner, applying for incentive(s) and incurring the actual eligible cost of the project.
- (c) **Branch Manager** means the manager of the branch primarily responsible for administration of this program or their designate.
- (d) **Building permit** means a permit issued under The Building Bylaw of the City of Regina authorizing the construction of proposed work.
- (e) **City** means the City of Regina.
- (f) **City Centre** means the area contained within the City Center Boundary as depicted in Appendix A
- (g) **Commercial** means all land uses excluding dwelling land use classes as defined by the *Zoning Bylaw*.
- (h) **Director** means the director of the department primarily responsible for administration of this program, or their designate
- (i) **Deputy City Manager** means the Deputy City Manager of the City Planning & Community Development Division, or their designate.
- (j) **Development** means a development within the meaning of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*.
- (k) **Development permit** means a permit issued pursuant to by *The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019 (Zoning Bylaw)* authorizing a development.
- (l) **Estimated eligible costs** mean the value of the total estimated eligible costs submitted by an applicant in an incentive application under this program.
- (m) **Funding commitment** means a written commitment by the City to the applicant to provide a grant upon completion of a project. The funding commitment may prescribe eligible costs and scope of work being incentivized, requirements for fulfillment of the terms and condition of the application and any other applicable agreements.
- (n) **Permit completion notice** means a written confirmation such as a final occupancy permit or notice of completion from the City of Regina that all work required under a valid permit has been completed.
- (o) **Priority funding area** means the area designated by the City of Regina as depicted in Appendix B
- (p) **Principal building** means “building, Principal” as defined by the *Zoning Bylaw*.

- (q) **Program area** means the area designated by City Council to which this policy applies as depicted in Appendix A.
- (r) **Project** means the work being undertaken on a private property that is eligible under this program.
- (s) **Project cost** means fees and costs including taxes limited to the following:
  - i. Design/Engineering fees by a qualified professional for the proposed work. Invoices dated within 6 months prior to the date of application will be accepted.
  - ii. Construction cost limited to materials and labour for the work described under each stream. Where the project is completed independently without a contractor, only the cost of materials are eligible.
- (t) **Property owner** means the registered owner(s) of a property or unit as indicated on the land title for the parcel in the Information Services Corporation (ISC) Land Titles Registry, or their designate.
- (u) **Qualified Professional** means an architect, engineer, journeyman (Red Seal), technician, or someone with experience or training in the design and construction industry as deemed appropriate by the City.
- (v) **Residential** means all dwelling land use classes as defined by the *Zoning Bylaw*.
- (w) **Residential business** means an accessory land use conducted in a residential unit by the resident of the unit or building for monetary gain and typically require a Residential Business License.
- (x) **Storefront improvements** mean aesthetic private property improvements to the facade of an existing building or property interfacing the street or sidewalk. Typically, in support of access to existing storefront or similar businesses. Excludes portions of property oriented to the rear or alleyway. The Branch Manager may provide flexibility on a case-by-case basis.
- (y) **Tenant** means an individual or entity occupying a space within an existing building rented from the property owner for a specified period for a prescribed use, as identified with a lease agreement or similar documentation.
- (z) **Tenant Fit-up** means fit out work or improvements to a unit/space within an existing principal building intended for a new tenant.

## C. Incentive Program Types

- 6 Subject to the requirements of this guideline, eligible projects located within the City Centre may be eligible for the following:

Incentive Stream:	Storefront Improvements	Tenant Fit-up
Offering:	Grant covering up to 50% of eligible project cost upon project completion to the lessor of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Estimated eligible project costs, or</li><li>- Actual eligible project cost</li></ul>	Grant covering up to 50% of eligible cost upon project completion to the lessor of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Estimated eligible project costs, or</li><li>- Actual eligible project cost</li></ul>
Funding Cap:	Maximum of \$50,000 per application within an application year	Maximum of \$50,000* per application within an application year <small>*May be applied for at the same time as Storefront Improvement for a max of \$100,000 combined</small>
Target Audience:	<b>Property Owner</b> or <b>tenant</b> financing the cost of the improvement in support of a business or activity.	A <b>Property owner</b> or a <b>new tenant</b> financing the cost of a new tenant fit up for a new business or activity.

## D. Eligibility

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### General Eligibility Requirements

The following eligibility criteria apply to all applications under this program. Additional eligibility requirements are identified for specific capital grants under *Incentive Specific Eligible Requirements*

- 7 A property with an existing principal building may be eligible for a grant incentive if it meets the following requirements:
  - (a) The property must be in the City Centre Boundary as shown in Appendix A.
  - (b) The project must incur a minimum of \$5,000 in total eligible project costs.
  - (c) The proposed project(s) have met the minimum 30 scorecard points per stream.
  - (d) The property must contain a principal building constructed at least 5 years prior to date of application.
  - (e) The project is within the first two floors of a building or property interfacing a sidewalk or street frontage. Properties with unique circumstances are subject to City approval.
  - (f) Construction work for the proposed project must have not started prior to the effective date of the intake period. Projects with unique circumstances are subject to City approval.
- 8 Priority will be given to new applicants with projects located within the priority funding area based on scorecard points. Remaining funds will be allocated to new applicants with projects based on scorecard points within the rest of the City Centre Boundary. Returning applicants, projects or properties that previously received funding will be allocated remaining available funds based on scorecard points.
- 9 Projects that have received previous municipal incentives are eligible, provided the proposed work has not been previously incentivized.

### Incentive Specific Eligibility Requirements

#### Storefront Improvements Stream

- 10 The Storefront Improvement stream is intended to support associated project costs for exterior aesthetic work related to:
  - (a) Refinishing of building frontages with mix of new materials.
  - (b) Redesign of the façade to improve visual appeal.
  - (c) Privately funded professionally installed artwork, playscape and permanent outdoor features on private property that interfaces the sidewalk or street frontage.
  - (d) Installation of new on-site permanent business name signage permanently affixed to the wall or privately owned parcel of land.
  - (e) Installation of accessibility features to improve access and entry to the building.
  - (f) Relocation, addition and enlargement of existing openings along frontage and side interfacing the sidewalk or street.
  - (g) Long-lasting landscaping on private property including tree planting, shrubs, soil, grass, statuary, rain gardens, perennial vegetation.
  - (h) Permanent electrified lighting affixed to the building or on site that is ornamental and intended to enhance visibility between the public and private realm.
- 11 The proposed project must be for new or existing commercial land use located within the building.



### Tenant Fit-up Stream

- 12 The Tenant Fit-up stream is intended to support associated project costs for interior unit work related to:
- (a) Alterations to change the layout within the unit.
  - (b) Aesthetic renovation of the unit, including walls, floors, ceiling, decorative hardware and lighting fixtures.
  - (c) Upgrades to the interior of a unit to meet zoning, fire, health and safety or building code, as part of a change in occupancy or use.
- 13 Applications received for the Tenant Fit-up stream are only available for the establishment of a new tenant within the existing principal building, not for alteration or expansion of an existing business. A lease agreement or letter of intent to lease for a minimum of two years would need to be provided at time of application.

### **Ineligible:**

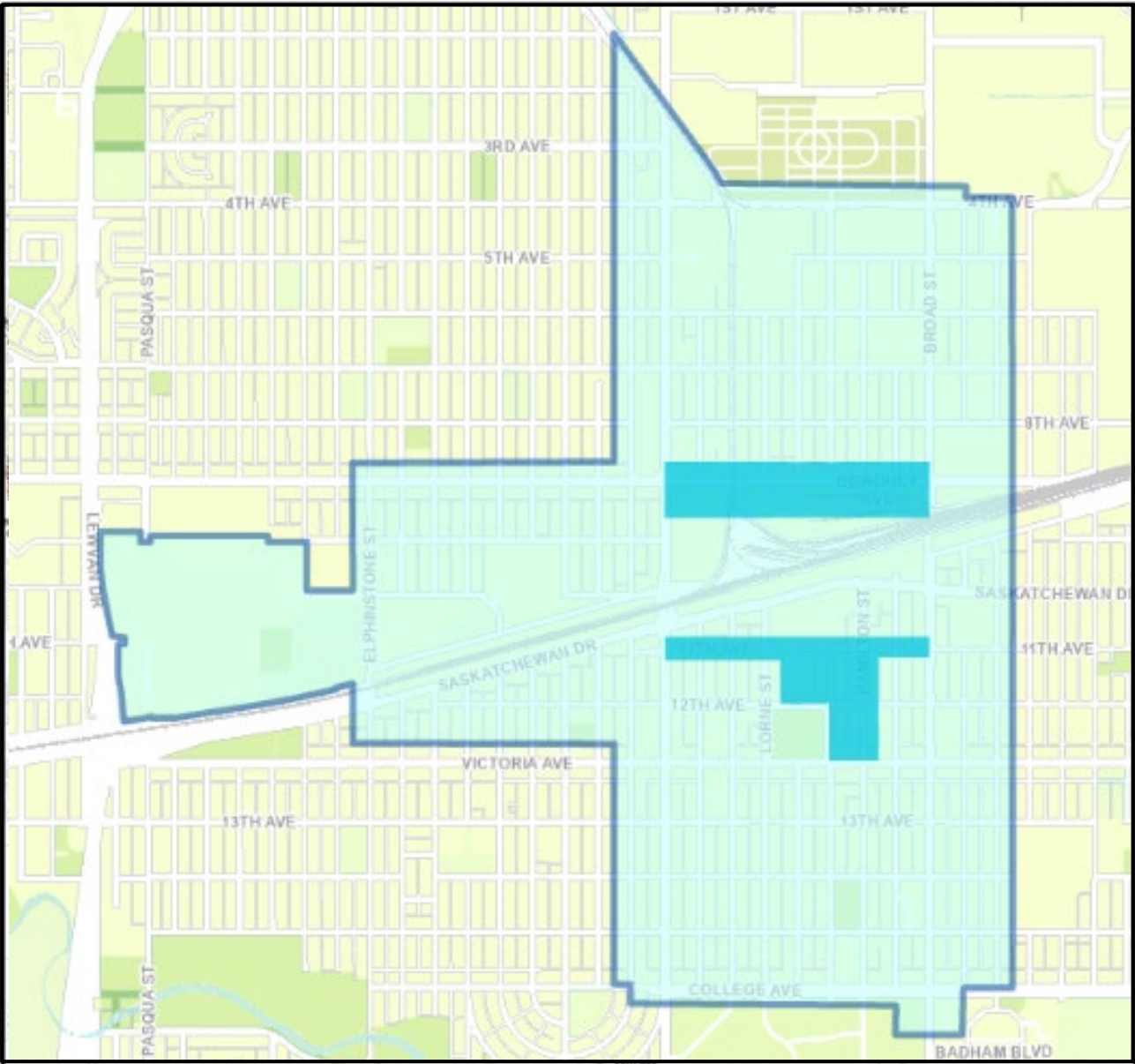
- 14 The following are not eligible under this program:
- (a) Legal fees, leasing fees, permit fees, insurance, gas, tools, consumables, cell phone fees and other incidental costs.
  - (b) Utility cut off or registration fees.
  - (c) Purchase of appliances, security systems, security or flood lighting, cameras, electronic devices and systems.
  - (d) Items that have value independent of the renovation, such as construction equipment and/or tools.
  - (e) Any financing costs (e.g., interest payments) associated with the proposed work(s).
  - (f) Construction contingencies.
  - (g) Cost to Purchase land/building/structures.
  - (h) Associated costs for of any part of the building, property, unit or system related to:
    - i. routine inspections,
    - ii. repair & maintenance,
    - iii. replacement of like for like (e.g., replacement of existing windows with new windows), and
    - iv. upgrade, replacement or repair of any structural, plumbing/sewer, mechanical, material or technological item, located on the interior or exterior of the property due to end of life.
  - (i) Reducing transparency through:
    - i. removing storefront windows or filling with glass or opaque blocks,
    - ii. Mirrored, frosted or tinted windows or doors,
    - iii. windows or doors with vinyl wraps, advertisements,
    - iv. Window or door security grills/bars, guards or similar in nature, and
    - v. other obstructions and/or visual clutter deemed ineligible by the City.
  - (j) Digital screens, flashing signage, decals, billboards, portable signs.
  - (k) Radically altering the design of a building that is on the heritage inventory or is a designated heritage property.
  - (l) Removing ramps, curb cuts or other accessibility features.
  - (m) Fencing or similar structures.
  - (n) Parking lot or pavement resurfacing, replacement or repair.
  - (o) Projects or land uses that are temporary in nature (i.e. Pop ups, Carts, Kiosks).
  - (p) Projects consisting only of the development of a “Dwelling”, “Accessory”, “Transportation”, “Storage”, “Utility”, or “Wholesale” and defined in the *Zoning Bylaw*.

- (q) Projects for the establishment of residential businesses.
- (r) Furnishings.
- (s) Property that is owned and/or projects led by governmental entities or agencies (i.e. municipal, federal, provincial).
- (t) Properties that is currently eligible and/or receiving incentives under the City Centre Vacant Lot Redevelopment Tax Exemption Policy.
- (u) Project cost for work that has already been completed or received notice of completion prior to the intake date.
- (v) Property owner(s), tenants and properties:
  - i. with outstanding taxes, utilities, parking or other charges owing and past due to the City,
  - ii. subject to any current orders issued against them,
  - iii. in active litigation against the City, or
  - iv. projects that have been completed or partially completed without proper permits or approvals.

15 The City may require any parties identified within the application to provide additional information deemed necessary to confirm eligibility for incentives. A deadline to provide the required information will be provided and failure to submit the required information by the deadline may result in eligibility being revoked.

# E. Related Documents

## Appendix A: General Program Boundary



LEGEND

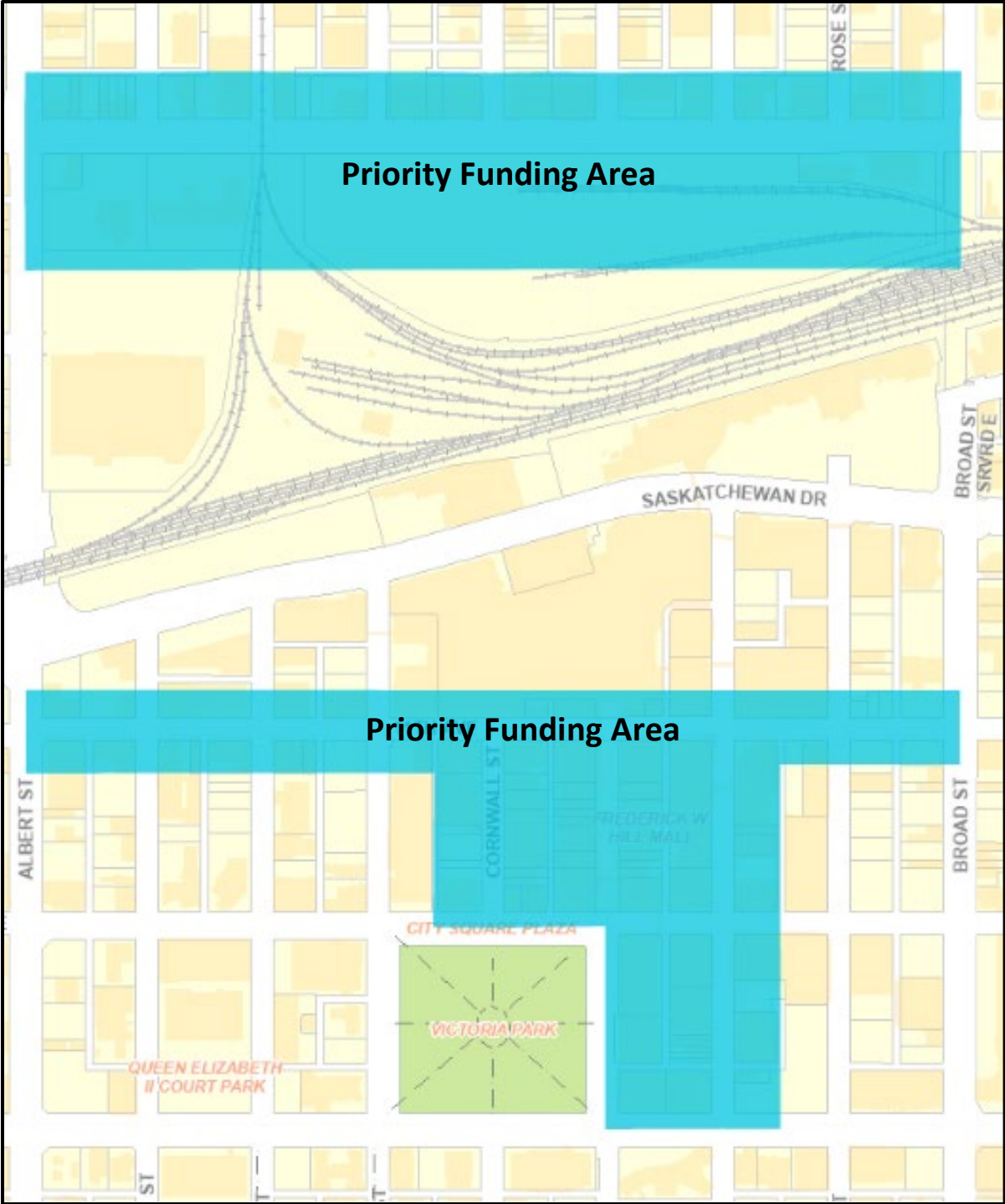
City Centre Boundary

2025 & 2026 Priority Funding Area –  
Reference Appendix B for details

A scale bar showing distances in meters (0, 100, 200, 400) and a north arrow pointing upwards.

10

Appendix B: Priority Funding Area



## Appendix C: Storefront Improvement Scorecard

Development Features		Examples & Ideas	Possible Points	Earned Points
<b>Placemaking</b> (35 points)	Building Façade enhancements that incorporate a mix of materials to create visual interest in all seasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decorative Canopy/Awnings/Marquee</li> <li>Decorative buildouts</li> <li>Use of a mix of materials including masonry, wood features, metal accents, paint, etc.</li> </ul>	15	
	Addition of permanent artwork and installations to the exterior of the building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artwork to blank facades</li> <li>Light-based artwork and installation that provide visual interest during evening and winter seasons</li> </ul>	10	
	Reduction of existing parking or excess bare land on site to encourage “stay in place” activities and a sense of exploration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive elements and freestanding sculptures/artwork that add visual interest to space</li> <li>Permanently affixed benches, seating, play structures</li> <li>Permanent landscaping elements beyond landscaping requirements of the Zoning Bylaw (e.g. Perennial trees, shrubs, rooftop gardens, water features, etc.)</li> </ul>	10	
<b>Safety, Transparency &amp; Accessibility</b> (50 points)	Signage that clearly defines the function within the building and supports readability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New permanently affixed signage</li> <li>Addition of building directory or wayfinding signage</li> <li>Signage and address that is scaled and uses a font that is easy to read from sidewalk</li> <li>Signage that includes a mix of languages and ways of reading</li> </ul>	10	
	Adapting barrier free design to improve accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to the building from the sidewalk or public realm converted to include a ramp or grade level entry</li> <li>addition of features such as handrails and automated door mechanisms</li> </ul>	15	
	Building openings improved to encourage transparency and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New clear glazing added to building walls along facades interfacing the streets that were previously blank</li> <li>Replacement of existing openings with enlarged clear glazing to increase transparency</li> <li>Adding, enlarging or relocating main entrances to sides interfacing the sidewalk to improve access by the public</li> </ul>	15	
	Exterior lighting to enhance visibility and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addition of permanent exterior lighting along street frontages (e.g. Pot lights, wall sconces, landscape lighting) oriented to the sidewalk and public access points</li> </ul>	10	
<b>Quality Design</b> (15 points)	Enhancements were developed in consultation with a qualified professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Architects (landscape, building, etc.)</li> <li>Urban Designer</li> <li>Planner</li> <li>Engineer</li> </ul>	5	
	Design considers neighbourhood context and aesthetics, including incorporating design features reflected in current available City policy and plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicable sections in Design Regina, Official Community Plan</li> <li>Neighbourhood Plans if applicable</li> <li>Independent site analysis considering the context of the surrounding neighbourhood</li> </ul>	5	
	Proposed design incorporates features beyond existing bylaw or code requirements and considers inspiration from best practice design principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design</li> <li>Universal Design</li> <li>Urban Design Placemaking</li> <li>Designs respecting heritage, arts and culture</li> </ul>	5	
<b>Total Possible Points</b>			100	
<b>Minimum to be Eligible for Storefront Improvement Incentives</b>			30	
City evaluation completed by: _____			Date: _____	



## Appendix D: Tenant Fit-up Scorecard

Development Features		Examples & Ideas	Possible Points	Earned Points
<b>Primary Land Use (45 points)</b>	Cultural, Arts & Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assembly Recreation</b> E.g., Gym/sports/Fitness facility, Entertainment and cultural attractions, Arcade, Bowling Alley, Escape Room, Movie Theatres, museums, Cultural & Creative Centers <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Industry, Artistic</b> E.g. Fine woodworking, glassmaking, pottery, etc.	20	
	Service, Food & Retail	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Retail Trade, Shop</b> E.g. Boutique, Grocery Store, Convenience Store <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Food &amp; Beverage, Lounge/Restaurant</b> E.g. Café, Restaurant, Licensed beverage room <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service Trade, Accommodation, Clinic, Light and/or Personal</b> E.g. Hotels, Medical Clinics, Counselling, Small appliance repair, Hair stylist <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Industry, Food &amp; Beverage</b> E.g. Microbrewery, Bakery, Chocolatier	10	
	Community & Education	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Institutional, Education</b> E.g., School <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Institutional Training</b> E.g. Job Training, Apprentice Training <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Institutional, Daycare</b> E.g. Adult daycare, Child daycare center, Nursery school/Playschool <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assembly, Community Centre</b> E.g. Rinks, Library, Community Centre	15	
<b>Business Functions (35 points)</b>	Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entryway is immediately located at grade level</li> <li>Access to business is abutting the sidewalk</li> <li>Interior activity visible from the street</li> </ul>	5	
	Location	The proposed tenant is located on one of the following floors: <input type="checkbox"/> Grade level <input type="checkbox"/> Lower level <input type="checkbox"/> Second level <input type="checkbox"/> Combination of the above noted levels	10	
	Unique venture	<input type="checkbox"/> The tenant is a locally owned business <input type="checkbox"/> The business is the first location within the city <input type="checkbox"/> The business introduces a new service or amenity to the City Centre	5	
	Operation	Hours of operations extend beyond standard weekday hours (typically 9am-5pm) <input type="checkbox"/> Evening hours (5pm-9pm) <input type="checkbox"/> Weekends (min 8+ hrs./day) <input type="checkbox"/> Unit provides a mix of services and/or shared tenants that encourage the activation of a unit space from morning to night E.g. Daytime coffee shop, Evening bar and lounge	15	
<b>Quality Design (20 points)</b>	Interior enhancements and design of the unit were developed with support from a qualified professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Architect</li> <li>Interior Designer</li> <li>Planner</li> <li>Others: _____ (Reference all that may apply)</li> </ul>	5	
	Additional amenities were incorporated into the unit	<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated Nursing Rooms <input type="checkbox"/> Child spaces/permanent play structures <input type="checkbox"/> Secure indoor bike parking <input type="checkbox"/> Public meeting areas <input type="checkbox"/> Low sensory room <input type="checkbox"/> Multipurpose space <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (Reference all that may apply)	15	
<b>Total Possible Points</b>			100	
<b>Minimum to be Eligible for Storefront Improvement Incentives</b>			30	
City evaluation completed by: _____ Date: _____				