



Motion Memorandum

SUBJECT: Proposed province-wide Heritage Helping Housing Grant Program (HHHGP) from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO)

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Councillor Shawna Stolte, Ward 4

Seconded by (for Council only): Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

Date to Committee: n/a

Date to Council: April 21, 2026

Motion for Council to Consider:

Whereas the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) is proposing a province-wide Heritage Building Grant for Housing entitled the Heritage Helping Housing Grant Program (HHHGP); and,

Whereas the ACO recommends that the Province create a new, application-based, matching grant program of \$10 million/year to generate new housing in existing heritage assets, whether designated or not; and,

Whereas the HHHGP would support Ontario's housing objectives while advancing the ACO's strategic goal to Keep | Fix | Reuse our heritage assets; and,

Whereas the HHHGP would incentivize owners to revitalize vacant or underutilized heritage buildings which:

- Creates new housing in existing buildings increasing the number of dwelling units;
- Reuses existing structures minimizing the need for new infrastructure;
- Rehabilitates older buildings making changes generally less expensive, uses local resources and creates local jobs;
- Keeps older buildings helping a community enrich certain neighbourhoods visually and through new residents while enhancing their identity and growing its tourism brand and appeal;
- Is a simpler and more direct way for heritage building owners to fund renovations or conservation;
- Can be an alternative to the Ontario heritage property tax relief program, which has limited impact on developers though reduces municipal revenues;
- Reduces carbon emissions in comparison to the demolition of the buildings and some new construction;

- Offers an incentive for owners to work with municipalities to have historic places recognized under the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and,
- Supports a partnership between many parties, based on a simple application modelled after the Alberta program, providing half the grant upfront making the grant program popular with developers and owners.

Now therefore be it resolved;

That the Heritage Burlington Advisory Committee recommends the City of Burlington endorse the proposal by the Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO) for a \$10 million/year matching Heritage Helping Housing Grant Program and that the Mayor send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier; Graham McGregor, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance and Natalie Pierre, MPP Burlington, to urge that funding for the program be included in the 2026 provincial budget and annually thereafter; and,

That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Big City Mayors.

Reason:

Conserving heritage resources is an important part of sustainable city building. Doing so can have many advantages for municipalities and their residents, including social, educational, environmental and economic benefits. The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario is requesting support for the Province to create a new, application-based, matching grant program of \$10M/year, modelled on an existing Alberta program. The grant program would incentivize owners and smaller developers to Keep | Fix | Reuse heritage buildings to create new housing.

Heritage grants can offer financial assistance under a variety of terms. Such grant programs can help property owners with the costs associated with restoring, preserving and rehabilitating heritage resources. Through matching heritage grants, supported by the Province of Ontario, municipalities and property owners, heritage buildings can be conserved and renovated to increase the number of residential dwelling units in heritage buildings. Such heritage buildings may have once provided dwelling units though are currently vacant/uninhabitable and no longer counted in the housing stock or could be adapted to offer residential uses or converted for additional dwelling units.

In Alberta, owners of legally protected heritage resources can apply for both municipal and provincial grants to support heritage conservation projects. The Heritage Preservation Partnership Program provides matching grants to support initiatives that preserve and interpret Alberta's heritage. The Province's Historic Resource Conservation Grants provide matching grants to individuals and organizations for conservation work on Alberta's Provincial Historic Resources, Municipal Historic Resources and Indigenous Historic

Places. Studies and professional services associated with the conservation of these resources and places and other undesignated historic resources may also be eligible.

Since its inception in 2012, the City of Calgary's Historic Resource Conservation Grant program supports conservation work for designated Municipal Historic Resources. Qualifying sites must be designated with a Municipal Historic Resource designation or be in the process of obtaining a designation and have entered into a legal agreement with the City of Calgary. These grants provide necessary assistance for owners of Municipal Historic Resources, induces dollar-for-dollar private investment in heritage conservation and directly supports specialized trades in the City's local economy.

Developers surveyed by the National Trust for Canada (NTC) in 2014 ranked a heritage revolving fund as their top incentive to encourage heritage development if:

- the grants are simple to apply for and to administer; and,
- the fund is large enough to meet at least 33% of the demand (so that applicants have a reasonable chance of recovering the cost and effort of applying) (NTC, 2014).

A Provincial matching Heritage Helping Housing grant demonstrates how heritage properties can play a strong supporting role in addressing Ontario's housing crisis.

Outcome Sought:

Seeking Council support for the resolution to authorize the Mayor to promptly send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier; Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance and Natalie Pierre, MPP Burlington, to urge that funding for the Heritage Helping Housing grant program be included in the 2026 provincial budget and annually thereafter.

Implications:

Applicants are expected to contribute a matching amount of the total eligible project cost. Properties must be formally heritage designated or in the process of being designated or under a legal agreement to qualify for most, if not all, such Provincial and municipal financial incentives.

References:

City of Calgary. 2026. [Heritage Grant Program](#).

National Trust for Canada. 2014. [Financial Measures to Encourage Heritage Development](#).

Province of Alberta. 2026. [Historic resource conservation grants](#).

Strategic Alignment:

- Designing and delivering complete communities
- Providing the best services and experiences
- Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
- Driving organizational performance

Approved as per form by the City Clerk