



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 26-112**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Kevin Gibbs Director Heritage Services
Date of Meeting: May 5, 2026
Subject: Heritage Grant By-Law Update

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 5. Drive Inclusive Economic Growth

Goal: 5.5 Continue to enhance Kingston as a tourist destination.

Executive Summary:

On December 2, 2025, through [Report Number 26-022](#), Council provided direction to repeal and replace By-Law Number 2018-26, "Being a By-Law to Establish a Heritage Grants Program, and to Repeal and Replace By-Law Number 2005-258", as amended. This report presents the replacement by-law and recommends it for all three readings at the April 21, 2026 Council meeting to allow the revised Heritage Grants program to come into effect immediately.

The City of Kingston Heritage Property Grants program provides matching grants to assist owners of heritage designated properties with the cost of undertaking eligible conservation works. The details of the revised Heritage Grants program are outlined in 'City of Kingston Heritage Property Grant Program', being Schedule "A" of the replacement by-law (Exhibit A). The revised Heritage Grants program increases the annual amount of the program to \$200,000 per year from the previous \$100,000 in accordance with the approved Heritage Services 2026 operating budget, and creates two funding streams: a large project stream with a single annual matching grant up to \$50,000, and a small project stream with one or more matching grants up to \$10,000 each.

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Recommendation:

That the By-Law attached to Report Number 26-112 as Exhibit A, A By-law to Approve a Heritage Property Grant Program for the City of Kingston, be approved and receive all three readings; and

That despite anything contained in the by-law attached to Report Number 26-112 as Exhibit A, for the 2026 budget year, the deadline for applications to the City of Kingston Heritage Property Grants program under the large project stream be extended to July 17, 2026 to provide sufficient time for property owners to prepare and submit applications.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Jennifer Campbell,
Commissioner, Community
Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	
Jenna Morley, City Solicitor	
Ian Semple, Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required

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Options/Discussion:**Background**

The *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) was established to ensure the conservation of heritage resources within the province. The OHA recognizes the economic, social and environmental benefit of protecting cultural heritage resources through the creation of designation by-laws that guide changes to protected properties. Heritage designation is an opportunity for municipalities to identify, protect and promote cultural resources that demonstrate history and identity. Municipalities in Ontario have several options to provide financial support to owners of heritage designated properties. These support options are generally for conservation and restoration projects and in recognition of a property owner's role in maintaining heritage resources that benefit the entire community.

A small number of property owners in Kingston have reported additional financial concerns related to heritage designations, particularly around increasing insurance premiums. This is despite clear guidance from the province that a heritage designation should not impact premiums or the ability to acquire insurance coverage, as there are no inherent additional risks or costs associated with designation. The City of Kingston currently has two financial incentive programs for owners of heritage designated properties: The Heritage Property Grant program and the Heritage Property Tax Refund program. This report relates to the Heritage Property Grant program only.

The current Heritage Property Grant program, as originally established through By-Law Number 2005-258 and since replaced by By-Law Number 2018-26, supports conservation projects on heritage designated properties such as renovations and improvements to heritage attributes. Qualifying conservation projects can receive 50% of eligible project costs up to \$5,000. Under the current program, property owners can apply once every two years. The total amount currently available for distribution as Heritage Property Grants is \$100,000 per year, which is included in the Heritage Services annual operating budget and currently paid from the Heritage Reserve Fund.

On December 2, 2025, Council approved the following staff recommendations through [Report Number 26-022](#):

That Council endorse increasing the Heritage Property Grant program to \$200,000 per year from the current \$100,000 per year, beginning in 2026 in accordance with the Mayor's budget direction; and

That Council direct staff to repeal and replace By-Law Number 2018-26 "Being a By-Law to Establish a Heritage Grants Program, and to Repeal and Replace By-Law Number 2005-258", as amended, with the replacement by-law to consider utilization of the remaining balance of the Heritage Reserve Fund and be presented to Council in Q1 2026;

This report responds to this Council direction and proposes to repeal and replace the current Heritage Grants Program. The proposed replacement by-law is attached as Exhibit A, 'A By-law

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to Approve a Heritage Property Grant Program for the City of Kingston', and details of the revised Heritage Grants program are outlined in Schedule "A", City of Kingston Heritage Property Grant Program.

Revised Heritage Property Grant Program

The revised Heritage Property Grant Program will help offset the rising costs of building materials and labour required for heritage conservation projects, in addition to addressing concerns related to increasing property insurance premiums.

Properties that are eligible for a grant under the revised program include properties that are (1) subject to a heritage conservation easement or (2) designated under Part IV of the OHA or (3) located within a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and identified in the HCD plan as a "heritage", "significant" or "contributing" property. To be eligible for a grant, the proposed conservation work must be authorized through a heritage permit or be subject to a heritage permit application.

The revised program introduces two funding streams: large project stream and small project stream.

The large project stream will fund one large project each calendar year with a matching grant up to \$50,000. The intention of this funding stream is to provide an option to support properties that require more substantial and costly conservation interventions (i.e. heritage designated churches). An eligible property can receive no more than one large project grant within any three-year period.

The small project stream is a continuation of the current funding program but with the maximum potential grant amount increased to \$10,000. An eligible property can only receive one small project grant per calendar year.

Applications for the large project stream grant will normally be due on the last business day of March. However, for the 2026 calendar year, staff are recommending that the deadline be extended to July 17th to provide time to advertise the new program and for applicants to prepare applications. Applications for the small project stream can be submitted any time but will not be awarded until the successful large project stream has been decided.

Upon receipt of a large project stream application, the Director of Heritage Services or their designate will review the application to ensure it satisfies the requirements of the program. If it does, the application will be submitted to the City of Kingston's Heritage Properties Sub-Committee for ranking and evaluation based on criteria outlined in Schedule "A", City of Kingston Heritage Property Grant Program. The Sub-Committee will select the application with the highest overall score and the Director will recommend the successful application to Council for approval.

Following the process for the previous heritage properties grant program, the Director of Heritage Services or their designate will select the successful applications for the small project

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grant stream in accordance with the program requirements. Applications to the small project stream will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis, based on available funding.

The Heritage Property Grant program was established in 2005 through By-Law Number 2005-258, which specified that interest on a \$500,000 Heritage Reserve Fund would be available annually for distribution as grants to eligible heritage properties. This by-law was repealed and replaced in 2018 through By-Law Number 2018-26, which does not specify the required funding source for the program. The overall annual fund for the grant program was then subsequently increased to \$100,000 in 2023 and then to \$200,000 in 2026 (as per direction issued by Council on December 2, 2025). This increase in the fund amount will see the draw down and closure of the Heritage Reserve Fund as the grant costs are fully transitioned to the annual operating budget of the Heritage Services Department.

Public Engagement

Members of the Heritage Properties Committee and the public participated in two Roundtable Discussions at the Heritage Resource Centre on September 24 and 25, 2025.

Climate Risk Considerations

The conservation of heritage resources contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the consideration of minimizing construction waste and retention of embodied carbon. The retention, adaptive reuse and ongoing stewardship of the built environment can be an important consideration in the City of Kingston’s strategy for mitigating climate degradation.

Heritage designation under the OHA ensures that conservation and stewardship are considered for proposed alteration on heritage properties. In this way, mitigation measures that both promote the retention of embodied carbon and minimize the impacts to heritage attributes will be considered through the heritage permitting process.

Existing Policy/By-Law

Ontario Heritage Act

By-Law Number 2018-26: A By-Law to Establish a Heritage Grants Program, and to Repeal and Replace By-Law Number 2005-258, as amended

Financial Considerations

This revised Heritage Grants Program increases the fund amount to \$200,000 per year (from the previous level of \$100,00 per year). For the 2026 to 2028 calendar years the program will be funded through a combination of reserve funds and Heritage Services annual operating budget, according to the following schedule:

2026: \$175,000 from the Heritage Reserve Fund and \$25,000 from operating budget, which was included as part of the 2026 Heritage Services budget

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2027: \$100,000 from the Heritage Reserve Fund and \$100,000 from operating budget

2028: \$45,000 from the Heritage Reserve Fund and \$155,000 from operating budget

2029 and beyond: \$200,000 from the Heritage Services operating budget

In the event that the grant program is undersubscribed in 2026-2028, any unused reserve funds will be distributed as grants in the following year with a corresponding reduction in contribution from the Heritage Services operating budget.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Alexis Vienneau, Associate Legal Council, Legal Services

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A A By-Law to Approve a Heritage Property Grant Program for the City of Kingston