



## REPORT

### Planning and Development Council

Meeting Date: May 6, 2024

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**FROM:** Planning Services Department

**DATE:** April 23, 2024

**SUBJECT:** 2024 Heritage Grant Program Recommendations

**LOCATION:** Town-wide

**WARD:** Town-wide

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#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the 2024 funding allotment as attached in 'Appendix A - Recommended Grant Projects and Maximum Approved Amounts' to the report titled 2024 Heritage Grant Program Recommendations dated April 23, 2024, be approved.

#### KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- This is the eleventh year of the Heritage Grant Program, which is an annual program with \$120,000 available in funding.
- Additional funds of \$35,340 are available for this project year from unused grants from previous years.
- 42 project applications were received requesting over \$287,000 in funding for conservation work on designated heritage properties.
- The Heritage Grant Evaluation Working Group met on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 to discuss all submissions and how to allot the available funding. This report contains their recommendations for projects and funding amounts. In total, 40 projects are recommended to receive funding.
- Restoration projects that improve structural stability and preserve exterior systems such as walls, roofs and windows were given priority during the evaluation process to ensure that the program funding supports the projects most necessary to preserve heritage buildings.
- Including this program year, the Heritage Grant Program will have provided over \$1,064,000 in funding to assist with more than 255 restoration and conservation projects worth more than \$6 million.

**BACKGROUND:**

This is the eleventh year of the Heritage Grant Program, which Council approved on an annual basis on May 16, 2016, following the successful completion of a three-year pilot program. The grant program was developed to provide funding for owners of properties designated under Part IV or Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) or with a heritage conservation easement agreement under s. 37 of the OHA.

The program sets out criteria for eligible conservation work, and defines what projects are not eligible to receive funding. Grants can be applied for as matching funding up to a maximum contribution of \$15,000.

The program offers a total of \$120,000 in funding each year through the Town’s operating budget but occasionally additional funds are available from unused grants, developer contributions or heritage fees.

The following chart provides an overview of the Heritage Grant Program statistics to date:

Program Year	Number of Projects	Requested Funding	Funding Available	Value of Projects
2014 (pilot)	28	\$235,000	\$80,000	\$500,000
2015 (pilot)	26	\$172,000	\$80,000	\$466,000
2016 (pilot)	23	\$138,000	\$80,000	\$370,000
2017	25	\$181,000	\$90,000	\$402,000
2018	19	\$164,000	\$90,000 + \$5,000	\$478,000
2019	51	\$379,000	\$90,000 + \$25,175	\$1,000,000
2020	25	\$207,000	\$90,000	\$510,000
2021	39	\$253,000	\$90,000 + \$53,275	\$740,000
2022	32	\$244,000	\$120,000 + \$26,834	\$827,000
2023	55	\$485,000	\$120,000 + \$17,965	\$2.1 million
2024	42	\$287,000	\$120,000 + \$35,340	\$717,000

This report provides recommendations for the allocation of the 2024 heritage grant funding and demonstrates the ongoing success of the program. At their meeting on April 23, 2024, the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee endorsed the funding recommendations attached in Appendix A.

**COMMENT/OPTIONS:**2024 Heritage Grant Program Recommendations

The 2024 Heritage Grant Program had a record setting number of applications and requested funding. Heritage planning staff received more than 60 inquiries about the program and 42 applications requesting over \$287,000 in grant funding.

The 2024 program was launched in January 2024 and applications were received until March 15, 2024. The eleventh year of the Heritage Grant Program continues the success of the program, with the combined value of the proposed projects at more than \$717,000.

As approved in the staff report 'Heritage Grant Committee Working Group' dated March 12, 2024, five members of the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee formed the Heritage Grant Evaluation Working Group to evaluate the applications. The working group met on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at Town Hall to review all 42 applications. As with previous years, the working group had the choice to fund six to eight applications to the maximum requested amount or instead to distribute the grant money to a maximum number of applicants.

Given that many of the applications were for similar projects (i.e. painting woodwork, historic roof replacement, window restorations), the working group felt it was important to distribute the available funding to as many eligible projects as possible. This is consistent with the approach to grant allocation for the past program years.

In order to allocate grant funding consistently and fairly, the working group ranked priority projects in order to determine how much funding each project would receive. High priority projects were considered as follows:

- Projects that propose restoration work of a structural nature, such as foundation and roof repair and stabilization.
- Projects that restore existing heritage attributes that are integral to the preservation of the superstructure (wall systems, roof) of the heritage building. This years' approved projects included support for the restoration of the plaster walls at Knox Presbyterian Church Sixteen, which were irreparably damaged due to an oil furnace malfunction and has resulted in the temporary closure of the church.
- Many of this years' projects involved restoration of historic windows and replacement/new wood storm windows, as well as significant repairs to historic stucco, wood siding and cedar siding.

The recommended projects and their associated maximum funding amounts are attached to this report as Appendix A.

Each approved project has been provided with a 'maximum grant amount', so that they may receive 50% of the costs of their approved projects to the maximum amount. Grant recipients will still be encouraged to complete their entire projects as proposed, but if they are not able to, a minimum scope of work will be required to be eligible for funding. If the grant recipient has met the approved minimum scope of work, the project will be eligible for 50% of the costs up to the maximum approved amount.

Following consideration by Council, all applicants will be notified of the decision regarding their application, and if applicable, the minimum scope of work to be completed.

As outlined in the Heritage Grant Program Procedures, grants funds will be paid to successful applicants at the satisfactory completion of their project. Grant recipients are required to contact heritage planning staff to arrange for an inspection to ensure that the completed work matches the approved project. If work does not meet the satisfaction of heritage planning staff, the grant funds will be withheld until the project does meet the satisfaction of heritage planning staff.

Invoices must also be presented at the inspection to ensure that grant recipients have covered 50% or more of their approved project costs. If a project is completed under budget and the maximum approved amount is more than 50% of the project costs, the grant recipient will receive only 50% of the final project costs.

#### Additional Funds

Additional funds were available for this program year from the following source:

- Unused grant funding from 2019 - \$35,340

Unused grants become available after the completion of the two-year period of validity, plus a two year extension, as outlined in the approved Heritage Grant Program Procedures. The unused grants are rolled into the next available program year and in this case, the unused portion of grants from 2019 is higher than typical. Staff attribute this to the COVID-19 pandemic that occurred less than a year after the approval of the 2019 grants and the subsequent shift in priorities, potential impact on personal finances and rapid increase of construction costs.

#### Designation Incentive

With the town's designation project to designate as many listed properties as possible before January 1, 2025, the Heritage Grant Program is the town's biggest incentive for property owners. Staff has heard from property owners that financial incentives can help balance any perceived negative impacts from heritage designation. Six applicants to the 2024 Heritage Grant Program have been designated under Part IV of the OHA within the past year. With the targeted

increase in designations, a budget increase for the Heritage Grant Program may need to be considered in the future.

### Conclusion

The eleventh year of the Heritage Grant Program has built upon the achievements of the past ten years the program has been offered. The review of previous grant years demonstrates the value of financial support and incentives for property owners who are stewards of Oakville's cultural heritage resources. Additionally, the program is an incentive for property owners considering heritage designation.

Heritage planning staff considers the eleventh year of the Heritage Grant Program a success and look forward to the improvements that will be made to Oakville's heritage properties because of this important program.

### **CONSIDERATIONS:**

#### **(A) PUBLIC**

All applicants to the Heritage Grant Program will be notified of the approval/rejection of their application and the grant amount, if approved, following Council approval.

#### **(B) FINANCIAL**

Funding for the Heritage Grant Program was approved through the town's annual budget process.

#### **(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS**

Heritage planning staff will continue to work with staff from the Finance Department to award heritage grants following the completion of approved projects.

#### **(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

This report addresses Council's strategic priority of Accountable Government.

#### **(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION**

A Climate Emergency was declared by Council in June 2019 for the purposes of strengthening the Oakville community commitment in reducing carbon footprints. The Heritage Grant Program encourages the restoration of historic materials, which diverts waste from landfills. The greenest building is the one that already exists and the Heritage Grant Program helps owners of designated properties maintain their buildings.

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – 2024 Grant Recommendations

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