



REPORT

Planning and Development Council

Meeting Date: May 20, 2025

FROM: Planning and Development Department

DATE: May 6, 2025

SUBJECT: 2025 Heritage Grant Program Recommendations

LOCATION: Town-wide

WARD: Town-wide

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RECOMMENDATION

That 'Appendix A – Heritage Grant Applications 2025' attached to the report titled '2025 Heritage Grant Program Recommendations', dated May 6, 2025, be endorsed.

KEY FACTS

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

- This is the twelfth year of the Heritage Grant Program, which is an annual program with \$180,000 available.
- An additional \$24,200 is available this year from unused grants from 2020. This amount is higher than usual due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 38 project applications are requesting over \$286,000 for conservation work on designated heritage properties.
- The Heritage Grant Evaluation Working Group met on Wednesday, March 27, 2025, to discuss the applications and how to allot the available funds. Appendix A contains their recommendations for projects and funding amounts. All 38 applications are recommended to receive funding.
- Including this year, the Heritage Grant Program will have provided over \$1,244,000 to assist with more than 290 restoration and conservation projects worth over \$7 million.

BACKGROUND

This is the twelfth 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 helps to offset the premiums that heritage property owners pay to get work done to their properties that meets heritage conservation standards. The program is open to owners of property designated under Part IV or Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) or property with a heritage conservation easement agreement under section 37 of the OHA.

The program has criteria for eligible grant projects, and also lists types of projects that are not eligible to receive funding. Grants can be applied for as matching funding up to a maximum contribution of \$15,000.

With a budget increase for the 2025 program, there is now \$180,000 in funding each year. Annually, there may be additional funds from unused grants, developer contributions or heritage fees, but this is only an occasional funding source.

The following chart provides 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 million
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
2025	38	\$286,798	\$180,000 + \$24,200	\$1 million

The Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee endorsed the projects and funding amounts recommended in Appendix A at their meeting on April 22, 2025.

COMMENTS

2025 Heritage Grant Program Recommendations

The Town received over 50 inquiries about the program and 38 applications requesting over \$286,000 in grant funding.

The 2025 program was launched in January 2025 and applications were received until March 17, 2025. The combined value of the applications is more than \$1 million.

As approved in the staff report 'Heritage Grant Program Evaluation Working Group', dated March 11, 2025, five members of the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee formed a working group to evaluate the applications. They met on Wednesday, March 27, 2025, to review all 38 applications and divide up the \$204,200 available funds (\$180,000 from the budget, \$24,200 from unused 2020 grants). Despite the budget increase and additional funds, grant requests exceeded the available funding.

As many applications are for similar projects (i.e. painting woodwork, masonry repairs, window restorations), the working group divided the funds to be as consistent and fair as possible. For example, similar projects should receive a similar percentage of their requested grant.

Highlights of the grant requests for 2025 include:

- Structural repairs to Knox Presbyterian Church
- Sixteen Arborist work to conserve a 300-year-old oak tree that spans four different heritage properties
- Stained glass window restoration at Knox Presbyterian Church at 89 Dunn Street
- Necessary structural repairs, including beams and foundations, to several historic residences
- Masonry repairs to the brick walls at St. John's United Church
- Repairs to the formal entrance stairs at Ennisclare, the former Cox Estate (now apartments)

Each project has been provided with a 'maximum grant amount', meaning that the property owner will be eligible to receive 50% of the cost of the work, up to the maximum amount. In the case that a project comes in under the anticipated cost, the property owner will receive 50% of the cost. Unused funds are rolled into future grant years.

Following Council's decision on the matter, applicants will be notified of their funding.

As outlined in the Heritage Grant Program Procedures, grants are paid when the project is completed. Recipients contact heritage planning staff to schedule an inspection or send photos of the completed work, along with their invoice for the project.

Additional Funds

Occasionally, additional funds are available, in addition to the budgeted funding. Funds can come from developer contributions, various heritage fees or fines, and unused grants. This year, additional funds came from unused grants from the 2020 program.

The unused funding from 2020 is higher than typical. Staff attribute this to the COVID-19 pandemic that began at the end of the grant application period and the subsequent shift in priorities, potential impact on personal finances and rapid increase of construction costs.

CONCLUSION and NEXT STEPS

The Heritage Grant Program provides tangible support for property owners who have committed to the conservation of Oakville's cultural heritage. This support is greatly valued and appreciated by the stewards of our local history and is an incentive for new designations as well.

Staff considers the twelfth 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

Applicants to the Heritage Grant Program will be notified of the approval of their application and the grant amount 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 building 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 – Heritage Grant Applications 2025

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