

# Heritage Preservation in Saskatoon

## ISSUE

This report outlines a proposed project to address existing recommendations in the Heritage Program and explore options to strengthen heritage preservation in Saskatoon in a more sustainable and pro-active manner.

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that the proposed capital project to support the Civic Heritage Program, as outlined in this report, be forwarded for consideration by City Council at the 2023 Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

## BACKGROUND

The Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services at the [April 12, 2022, meeting](#) requested:

“That Administration report back on current work to promote the Heritage Program and options to strengthen heritage preservation in Saskatoon in a more sustainable and pro-active manner. Please include a jurisdictional analysis, review of applicable façade fees and funding options in time for next budget deliberations.”

## Heritage Policy and Program Review

In 2012, a comprehensive review of the Heritage Policy and Program was undertaken. Several key weaknesses were identified including:

- There are very few heritage sites that have any form of legal protection;
- The level of conservation achieved on heritage projects has been inconsistent; and
- The City of Saskatoon (City) heritage incentives are inadequate to achieve the stated goals of the Heritage Program.

[The Heritage Policy and Program Review](#) identified 40 action items. Currently, of the 40 action items identified, 13 have been completed, 17 have been initiated and/or are ongoing and 10 have not been started. There are an additional three action items, which have been identified by the Heritage Program since 2012, that are also unresolved (see Appendix 1).

## City Centre Plan

[The City Centre Plan 2013](#) recommended that the City “identify areas of heritage interest”; this recommendation is still outstanding.

### Heritage Program Funding

The Program is funded through the operating budget with an annual contribution to the Heritage Reserve. The Heritage Reserve received additional funding in the 2022/2023 Budget, resulting in \$86,200 in funds received in 2022 and \$112,400 in 2023, with following years receiving a CPI increase of 2%. The funds are distributed as follows:

- Heritage Reserve (financial incentives for Municipal Heritage Properties and Heritage Plaques): \$64,200 for 2022 and \$90,400 for 2023;
- Research/Heritage Awareness Programming (Doors Open Event): \$12,000; and
- Façade Conservation and Enhancement Program: \$10,000.

Applications for financial incentives for Municipal Heritage Properties and plaques varies from year to year. While funds are available in the Heritage Reserve, incentives for larger conservation projects remain limited. See Appendix 2 for the Heritage Conservation Program – Reserve Sufficiency Update report and Appendix 3 for the Current Financial State of the Heritage Program.

The Heritage Program is supported by one full-time employee, the Heritage and Design Coordinator. This position is funded through the operating budget.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Administration reviewed outstanding actions from the Heritage Policy and Program Review, the Local Areas Plans and the City Centre Plan to identify a prioritized, phased work plan. The intent of this work plan will be to provide background information and options to enhance the Heritage Program through a sustainable, phased approach.

A three-phase project is being proposed to address the outstanding implementation items, to strengthen the Heritage Program with the objectives of confirming the City's leadership role in this area of public policy and to increase integration of the Heritage Program into broader civic goals (see Appendix 4). The proposed project was reviewed with the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee to align with their work plan and additional discussions will occur to continue to build out details of the project, once funding is secured.

The following provides a summary of the proposed work for each phase:

- Phase 1 - Jurisdictional Review – A jurisdictional review of Canadian and international municipalities, building on existing work. This would identify options, best practices and alternative tools to better support the Heritage Program.
- Phase 2 - Support for heritage property owners - Building on the research completed in Phase 1, this would include a review of existing incentives and options for new program creation and prioritization of heritage assets in Saskatoon for enhanced conservation methods.

- Phase 3 - Public awareness – This would include options for creation of new educational materials, including interpretive features to bring stronger awareness of the City’s history and heritage assets.

### Capital Project for Heritage Program Updates

In order to proceed with the proposed work, additional funding for a new capital project is required to provide appropriate resources to facilitate the work. The work plan would form the scope of the capital project. Results of the project would inform program changes and funding requests for future budget deliberations.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

To fund the capital project, Administration is requesting \$160,000 from the Reserve for Capital Expenditures (RCE), to support one temporary staff resource dedicated to this project.

For 2023, as of the writing of this report, the RCE has been fully allocated; however, if funds are returned to source, or are otherwise available in that Reserve, the amount of returned funding could be an option for a funding source for this capital project, to be considered and allocated by City Council during 2023 Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

An option would be to increase the annual operating contribution to the Heritage Reserve and utilize the Heritage Reserve to fund this capital project work in the near term. This option would require an operating increase of approximately \$30,000 and would then limit or restrict any Heritage Conservation applications for the next 2 years. This option would have the benefit of increasing the annual operating contribution to be in a better place, in future years, to address some of the recommendations arising from the capital project work.

Another option would be to provide a combination of RCE funding and allocating funding from the Heritage Reserve to get to the full \$160,000 required to undertake the capital project work.

While utilizing the Heritage Reserve funding to undertake this capital project is not the intended use of the Heritage Reserve, Council could approve this onetime use, to help address the need for this work and strengthen the overall Heritage Program going forward.

### **NEXT STEPS**

This report is requested to be forwarded to the 2023 Business Plan and Budget deliberations for consideration. Should City Council approve additional funding for 2023, Administration will proceed with the project as outlined in this report. If the request is not funded, it will be brought forward to the 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations process.

**APPENDICES**

1. Heritage Action Items Summary - October 2022
2. Heritage Conservation Program – Reserve Sufficiency Update
3. Current Financial State of the Heritage Program
4. Heritage Program Project Work Plan

**REPORT APPROVAL**

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