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Date February 11, 2025 **Report No.** 2025-45

To Chair and Members
Combined Committee of the Whole – Operations & Planning and Administration

From Nicole Wilmot
Commissioner of Community Development

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item
Item For Consideration

2.0 Topic **Funding Request for the Heritage Grant Program [Financial Impact = \$50,000 annually for 2025-2027 funded from the Cultural and Built Heritage Reserve (RF0570)]**

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2025-45, titled “Funding Request for the Heritage Grant Program”, BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT the Heritage Grant Program pilot period end and the program BE CONTINUED on a permanent basis; and
- C. THAT \$50,000 BE FUNDED from the Cultural and Built Heritage Reserve (RF0570) annually for 2025-2027 to support the Heritage Grant Program.

4.0 Executive Summary

Council established the Heritage Grant Program under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by passing By-law 116-2018 in 2018 and provided a

budget of \$75,000 to fund the program from the Council Priorities Reserve (RF0558). The program initially ran as a three-year pilot program which provided a maximum grant of \$5,000 per application. The pilot period was extended to the end of 2025, and changes have also been made during the extended pilot period to streamline the application process for applicants and the City, and to increase the maximum funding available (up to \$20,000 per application).

From the program's start through 2023, seven grant applications were approved and paid out for a combined total of \$24,974.09 in grant funding. In 2024 and early 2025, an additional eight grant applications have been approved accounting for an additional \$41,161.53 in committed or issued grants. In total, \$66,135.62 has been committed/issued out of the original \$75,000.

Staff were directed by Council to report back by the end of 2025 on the status of the program and additional funding request. Given the present budget remaining, Staff have prepared this Report earlier in the year than originally anticipated. To continue the program's assistance to owners of designated heritage properties, Staff are recommending that Council:

- 1) End the pilot period of the Heritage Grant Program and approve the program continuing on an ongoing basis; and
- 2) Approve an annual budget of \$50,000, for each of 2025, 2026 and 2027, to be funded from the Cultural and Built Heritage Reserve (RF0570).

Funding allocated through a reserve will not impact the annual tax levy and is funded by casino revenues instead. Finance and Tourism & Culture Staff have confirmed that the Cultural and Built Heritage Reserve has sufficient room to fund the Heritage Grant Program without impacting other programs relying on this reserve. No program changes are proposed at this time, and Staff proposes that approximately \$8,864.38 remaining in the current program budget (uncommitted funds) be returned to the Council Priorities Reserve (RF0558). Staff is proposing that the next multi-year budget process will be utilized to request funding in 2028 and beyond.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this Report is to request that the Heritage Grant Program's extended pilot period end; that the program continue on an ongoing basis; and that an additional funding allocation be provided in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

6.0 Background

Council established the Heritage Grant Program under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by passing By-law 116-2018 in 2018 and provided a budget of \$75,000 to fund the program from the Council Priorities Reserve (RF0558). The program was initially implemented for a three year pilot, but uptake was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Council approved the extension of the Heritage Grant Program pilot on December 21, 2021 along with some procedural changes to benefit property owners using the program. Council also approved a recommendation directing that Staff to report back by the end of 2025 with respect to an annual funding allocation (refer to [Report 2021-511](#)). Additional funding was not sought in 2021.

Subsequent to extending the Heritage Grant Program, Council considered and approved additional procedural changes to streamline the process and increased the maximum grant amount from \$5,000 to \$20,000 in December 2023 (refer to Report [2023-571](#)). When the program was amended in 2023, Staff did not request an additional budget as further monitoring was warranted. Staff did note that should additional funding be needed to continue offering the program, Staff would report back to Council.

As a result of Heritage Grant Program funds being committed or paid out as of this Report, approximately \$8,864.38 is unspent in the original \$75,000 budget. Given the remaining funds together with prior direction to report back to Council by the end of Q4 2025, Staff have prepared this Report to:

- 1) Request the program change from a “pilot” status to “ongoing”; and
- 2) Request additional funding for the program in 2025, 2026, and 2027.

Staff will continue to monitor program performance and prepare a new funding request as part of the next multi-year budget process.

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

7.1 2023-2026 Council Priorities

This Report is consistent with Strategic Theme 8 (Develop a planning and implementation schedule and commit resources for various projects related to City assets), Priority 4: Heritage Designations – Introduce programs that would encourage and incentivize property owners to designate their properties. The designation of properties under the *Ontario*

Heritage Act can also contribute to Strategic Theme 5 (Commit to and implement the downtown revitalization plan and vision) and Strategic Theme 10 (Create a vision statement for the long-term future of the City). The recognition and preservation of properties with heritage value for future generations ensures that stories of the history of Brantford have a tangible link to the present and into the future.

8.0 Input From Other Sources

8.1 Staff in other Departments

Long Range Planning Staff consulted with Staff in Finance as well as Economic Development, Tourism, and Cultural Initiatives in the preparation of this Report.

8.2 Brantford Heritage Committee

At its meeting on January 27, 2025 the Brantford Heritage Committee received Report 2025-47 and passed the following resolution:

- A. *THAT Report 2025-47, titled "Information Respecting a new Funding Request for the Heritage Grant Program" BE RECEIVED; and*
- B. *THAT the following comments of the Brantford Heritage Committee BE INCLUDED in staff's report to Committee of the Whole:*
 - i. *The Brantford Heritage Committee recommends that the Heritage Grant Program be continued as the Committee believes that the Program is unique and provides valuable support for the preservation of Brantford's heritage; and*
 - ii. *The Brantford Heritage Committee thanks the ongoing support of Council and staff in recognition of this program.*

9.0 Analysis

As Staff are requesting an additional budget allocation for the Heritage Grant Program, this Report provides a summary of the program in subsection 9.1 and an overview of applications received in subsection 9.2.

9.1 Program Structure

The Heritage Grant Program provides a matching grant (50% of eligible costs) for projects that appropriately repair, restore, or maintain a designated heritage property and its heritage attributes. Heritage attributes are those features that contribute to the heritage value of the property (e.g. architectural details). The maximum grant amount under the Heritage Grant Program is \$20,000.

Approval authority for Heritage Grant Program applications has been delegated by Council to Staff, as follows:

- Major Heritage Grants: applications for grants over \$7,500 up to the maximum of \$20,000 are reviewed by the Brantford Heritage Committee and Staff prior to a decision being made.
- Minor Heritage Grants: applications for grants of \$7,500 or less can be reviewed and approved by Staff without requiring review by the Brantford Heritage Committee prior to a decision being made.

Where an application to the program is approved, the applicant signs a grant agreement which details the eligible costs, the maximum grant, and the timing of payments. Grants are paid by the City to property owners after work is completed, contractors are paid by the applicant (verified with documentation submitted to the City), and Staff conduct a site visit to confirm work was completed as described in the application. Staff track encumbered funds in the program budget as grants are approved and paid out after work is completed. Applications can be made at any time of year provided the program budget has sufficient unencumbered funds remaining. Where an application is not completed within the term set out in the agreement, the grant is retained and the funds become available for a new application.

Staff are not recommending any program changes at this time.

9.2 Applications Approved To-Date

From 2019-2023, eight projects were allocated funding, and a total of \$24,974.09 was paid out across seven of those applications. A summary of these applications is provided in Table 1 below. Application HG-03-22 was ultimately not paid out as the term of the agreement expired.

Table 1: Heritage Grant Program applications approved and paid from 2021 to 2023.

Application # and Address	Eligible Costs at Time of Application	Grant Amount Paid (\$)	Notes
HG-01-21 211 Brant Ave	\$5,800	\$2,900	
HG-02-21 176 Wellington Street	\$6,400	\$3,200	
HG-03-21 175 Brant Avenue	\$7,650	\$3,825 approved \$2,850 paid	Grant reduced to reflect eligible costs actually incurred by the applicant.
HG-01-22 58 Lorne Crescent	\$8,345	\$4,172.50 approved \$3,624.09 paid	Grant reduced to reflect eligible costs actually incurred by the applicant.
HG-02-22 38 Dufferin Ave	\$11,250	\$5,000	
HG-03-22 76 Colborne Street	\$10,030	\$5,000 approved \$0 paid	Grant term expired and grant was not paid out.
HG-01-23 235 Brant Ave	\$113,300.31	\$5,000	
HG-02-23 95 Dufferin Ave	\$4,800	\$2,400	
Total Value of Grants Paid, 2021-2023		\$24,974.09	

Over the course of 2024 and early 2025, formal consultations were held for a total of 17 properties (as the first step in the application process). A total of eight applications were processed and approved for funding in 2024 and early 2025 for a combined total of \$41,161.53 in approved grants. Table 2 provides a summary of the eight applications received and funds either committed or paid out to date, for 2024 and early 2025.

Table 2: List of Heritage Grant Applications approved in 2024, and 2025 to-date.

Application # and Address	Eligible Costs at Time of Application	Grant Amount Paid or Committed (\$)	Notes
HG-01-24 34 Myrtleville Drive	\$2,400	\$1,200	Committed funds.
HG-02-24 53 Charlotte Street	\$40,000	\$20,000	Committed funds (pending passage of the designation by-law; refer to Report 2025-2).
HG-03-24 327 Dalhousie Street	\$5,163.72	\$2,581.86	Grant paid as of this Report.
HG-04-24 42 North Park Street	\$10,479.65	\$5,239.82	Committed funds.
HG-05-24 266 Brant Ave	\$6,500.00	\$3,250.00	Committed funds.
HG-06-24 34 Palace Street	\$3,210.71	\$1,605.35	Grant paid as of this Report.
HG-07-24 14 Hillcrest	\$7,914.00	\$3,957.00	Committed funds.

Application # and Address	Eligible Costs at Time of Application	Grant Amount Paid or Committed (\$)	Notes
HG-01-25 140 Brant Ave	\$6,655.00	\$3,327.50	Committed funds.
Total Value of Grants, 2024-2025		\$41,161.53	

In total, the 15 applications from 2021 to early 2025 approved to date will have received \$66,135.62 in funding from the Heritage Grant Program’s initial allocation of \$75,000 discussed in Section 5 (Background) of this Report, leaving a balance of \$8,864.38.

10.0 Financial Implications

Staff have detailed a 2025-2027 funding request (years 2025, 2026, and 2027) to extend the Heritage Grant Program pilot in subsection 10.1 below and provide an overview of longer term program funding intent for 2028 and beyond in subsection 10.2. Staff notes that the intent is for the 2025-2027 program to be funded from the Cultural and Built Heritage Reserve (RF0570). By funding from a reserve, the continuation of the Heritage Grant Program will not impact the municipal tax levy.

10.1 2025-2027 Funding Request

Staff is requesting that Council approve an additional budget allocation to the 2025-2027 Heritage Grant Program in the annual amount of \$50,000 to be funded from the Cultural and Built Heritage Reserve (RF0570) which has an annual allocation of \$250,000. Finance and Tourism & Culture Staff have reviewed the forecasted draws from this reserve and confirmed that there is capacity to fund the Heritage Grant Program without impacting other programs.

Staff are requesting \$50,000 annually as it would allow two applications to be funded at the maximum amount (\$20,000) without fully depleting the budget in 2025. This assumption is based on several larger scale projects discussed with property owners in 2024. Staff will continue to monitor

program uptake each year to determine whether the budget requested remains appropriate.

10.2 Future Funding Requests (funding in 2028 onward)

Staff are proposing that future requests for funds to be allocated in 2028 or later be incorporated into the multi-year budget process. Staff will continue to monitor program uptake throughout 2025-2027 to determine if a budget of \$50,000 remains sufficient. At the appropriate time, Long Range Planning Staff will review the program uptake and determine an appropriate annual budget (based on average annual demand) and work with Finance Staff to determine an appropriate funding source.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

There are no quantifiable climate and environmental implications directly associated with this report.

12.0 Conclusion

The City of Brantford's Heritage Grant Program budget of \$75,000 was funded from the Council Priorities Reserve (RF0558). As of early 2025, approximately \$8,864.38 in uncommitted funds remain and will be returned to the Council Priorities Reserve. Staff are therefore requesting \$50,000 annually be allocated from the Cultural and Built Heritage Reserve (RF0570) in 2025-2027. Staff will continue to monitor the uptake of the grant program and consider a new funding request to support the program on an ongoing basis as part of the next multi-year budget process.



Nicole Wilmot, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Community Development

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In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required yes no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk yes no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? yes no