

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: October 18, 2024</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of Heritage Advisory Committee</p> <p>From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
	<p>Meeting date: November 12, 2024</p>

Subject

Proposed Updates to the Designated Heritage Property Grant Program

Recommendation

That the Proposed Updates to the Designated Heritage Grant Program, as per the Corporate Report from the Commissioner of Community Services dated October 18, 2024, be approved.

Executive Summary

- Staff are recommending four changes to the Designated Heritage Property Grant program.
- The combination of the three funding streams into one with a maximum grant amount of \$25,000 or 50 percent of eligible projects costs, whichever is less.
- Formalizing the merit-based approach to allocating funding.
- Having the grant program open from February until October with three review periods.
- Delegating approval authority to the Manager of Indigenous Relations, Heritage and Museums.

Background

In May 2007, Council adopted By-law 0184-2007, as amended February 25, 2009, to provide grants to owners of heritage designated properties. The program assists heritage designated property owners with financial assistance from a minimum of \$500 to a maximum of \$5,000 in matching funds for conservation projects, and up to \$10,000 for structural projects.

Properties must be designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The work proposed must be a restoration or reconstruction of original architectural elements or must be works which will lead to the continued conservation of the structure and its original architectural elements.

Staff continually review the Designated Heritage Property Grant program to ensure its ongoing growth and success. This review began with research of other municipalities that offer heritage grants including Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Oakville, Brampton and Burlington. Staff also consulted with the Heritage Grant Working Group and designated heritage property owners to determine challenges in the application process.

This research and feedback has already led to a number of changes to encourage better use such as the implementation of a merit-based review of applications and ensuring property owners who have been approved for funding, do not have to forfeit funding due to delays in permitting or unforeseen circumstances.

In 2019, the Heritage Advisory Committee approved a three-year pilot program, which included the following changes to the grant program:

1. The application intake period was extended to allow for multiple application intakes if necessary.
2. The Heritage Grant Working Group could be convened multiple times a year to allow for continual intake of applications.
3. Recommendations were provided to the Director of the Culture Division for approval (as per Heritage Grant By-Law 184-07).
4. Funding is now determined based on merit and is allocated on a first-come first-serve basis.
5. A third tier of funding was created to allow projects requiring a significant amount of restoration and structural work to apply for up to \$25,000.

This pilot program was extended an additional year due to COVID-19. These changes led to the grant program utilizing the total Designated Heritage Property Grant budget of \$75,000 for the first time since the inception of the grant program.

In 2022 the Government of Ontario passed Bill 23 which introduced legislation restricting the time a property could be listed on a City's Heritage Registry without being designated to two years. It also stated that once a property was removed from the Heritage Registry it could not be re-added for a period of five year. Through forecasted done by City of Mississauga Heritage Planning staff this change will lead to two times the number of Heritage Designated Properties by 2027 than prior to Bill 23.

Comments

Through the success of the pilot program and the revisions to the Ontario Heritage Act outlined in Bill 23 and 200, we are proposing a number of changes to ensure the grant program is meeting the needs of designated heritage property owners.

The measures are as follows:

1. Combine the three funding tiers into one.
2. Set the maximum funding at \$25,000 or 50% of the total eligible project costs, whichever is less.
3. Formalize the merit-based evaluation system and allocation of funds on a first-come first-served bases.
4. Leave the grant program open from February until October with three review periods.
5. Allow for the Manager of Indigenous Relations, Heritage and Museums to have the same delegate authority as the Director in regard to the approval of designated heritage property grants each year.

The current tiered system used for the grant program no longer meeting the needs of designated heritage property owners. This is particularly evident with the cost of windows which over the last four years has averaged over \$43,000 while the grant program will only cover \$5,000 under the current General Conservation stream.

Through the pilot program's introduction of the \$25,000 stream of funding all available funding was used for first time since the grant programs inception. It is the intention of staff to consolidate all streams of funding into one and set the maximum to \$25,000 or 50% of the total eligible funding which ever is less. This would continue to encourage property owners with larger project to apply while increasing the amounts for projects which have seen a rise in costs over recent years.

Based on the data available in Appendix 1, the City would still be able to fund a similar number of projects. The increase in the maximum available amount will be offset by the increase in the grant program budget and the fact that many of the applications are for grants below the maximum amount.

The pilot program also saw the introduction of a formalized merit-based evaluation system where each application in graded based how well it met the priorities of the grant program. This change allowed staff to better explain and defend the decision made by the Heritage Grant Working Group. It also allowed us to articulate to property owners how they could improve their grant in culture years. Staff are recommending to permanently implement the evaluation criteria below.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Prioritized the restoration of existing elements over replacement	2
Utilizing best practices	3
Application clearly outlines the project and demonstrates the need for the work to be completed	2

The proposed project is being undertaken on a heritage element of the property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. an element of the property which has been identified as heritage in a heritage bylaw or one of the Conservation District plans. OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is instrumental in maintaining the heritage elements 	2
The Property has not received funding in the past or has successfully completed a funded project on a heritage element in the last two years.	1
Total	10

The grant program will also remain open to applicants from February until October, allowing property owners to submit applications for their projects when they are happening. To accommodate this there will be three review periods ending in March, July and October. The Heritage Review Sub-committee will meet at these times and review any applications received up to that point. This will allow staff to better utilize available funding and ensure that if an approved project is canceled prior to the end of the year, the money allocated to that project can be redistributed.

To ensure the timely allocation of funds to applicants, staff are recommending the Manager of Indigenous Relations, Heritage and Museums be provided with delegated authority over approval of the Designated Heritage Property Grants. This should assist with ensuring all available funds are available each year.

The changes recommended in this corporate report will correspond with an as needed increase of the Designated Heritage Property Grant budget of \$25,000 annually. In order to meet the continued increase in costs associated with materials and labour associated with restoration and conservation efforts on heritage properties. Heritage Planning will continue to submit annual budget requests as the program continues to meet its annual fulfillment of projects funded.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact resulting from the recommendation in this report.

Conclusion

Staff are recommending four changes to the Designated Heritage Property Grant Program.

1. The combination of the three funding streams into one with a maximum grant amount of \$25,000 or 50 percent of eligible projects costs, whichever is less.
2. Formalizing the merit-based approach to allocating funding.
3. Having the grant program open from February until October with three review periods.
4. Delegating approval authority to the Manager of Indigenous Relations, Heritage and Museums.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Grant Allocation Analysis

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jodi Robillos", is written over a horizontal line.

Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

Prepared by: Andrew Douglas, Indigenous Relations, Heritage & Museums