



Municipal Financial Incentives for Heritage Properties

In order to provide benefit and enjoyment to the community, heritage properties need to be properly maintained and conserved. Many of these properties are privately owned, and providing financial and other support can make a real difference in helping owners to care for their properties.

For more information on municipal financial incentives, please contact the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport by phone or email:

- 416-326-9326
- 1-888-997-9015 (toll free)
- general_info@mtc.gov.on.ca

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Municipalities have implemented a variety of different strategies at the local level to encourage investment in heritage properties.

Grants and Loans

Under Sections 39 and 45 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, councils can pass by-laws providing grants or loans to owners of property that has been designated under Part IV (individual property designation) or Part V (heritage conservation districts) to help them cover the costs of repair and restoration. Councils can attach their own terms and conditions to funding. Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor, Petrolia and Sault Ste. Marie are among the municipalities that have established such programs.

Heritage Property Tax Relief

Heritage property tax relief is a financial tool for municipalities to help owners maintain and restore their properties for the benefit of the entire community – today and into the future.

Section 365.2 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* gives municipalities the option of establishing a program to provide property tax relief (between 10 to 40 per cent) to owners of eligible heritage properties. Councils must pass a by-law to establish a local program. To date, more than 40 municipalities have adopted this program, including Chatham-Kent, Thunder Bay, Peterborough, Kingston and Mississippi Mills.

The province shares in the cost of the program by funding the education portion of the property tax relief. Municipalities that adopt the heritage property tax relief will contribute to this program by funding their portion of the tax relief.

Please refer to the guide [“Getting Started: Heritage Property Tax Relief– A Guide for Municipalities”](#) available on the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport website.

Community Improvement Plans

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* allows councils to pass by-laws to identify community improvement project areas and develop plans to revitalize them. These areas can be targeted for a variety of municipal improvements, including municipal property acquisition, land assembly and sale of lands, construction and rehabilitation of municipal facilities or infrastructure and signage, streetscape and landscaping improvements.

Municipalities can also use community improvement plans to establish a wide range of financial incentive programs such as façade improvement grants and loans, fee rebates, design study grants and tax assistance.

Community improvement plans are an opportunity to identify any heritage resources within the project area and plan for their conservation. Some municipalities have established incentives that directly target heritage property conservation or rehabilitation, or that provide additional financial assistance for heritage properties. For example, the Town of Halton Hills Community Improvement Plan Façade Improvement Grant offers an increased grant for properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* or listed on the municipal heritage register.

For further information, please refer to the “[Community Improvement Planning Handbook](#),” available on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website.

The information contained in this InfoSheet should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialized legal or professional advice in connection with any particular matter.

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