



MEMORANDUM



TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: Regan Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage Planning

DATE: July 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Heritage Helping Housing 2025
Proposed Heritage Building Grant for Housing
Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) Initiative

Project: Proposed Heritage Building Grant for Housing

Background:

- ACO initiative
- To support Ontario's housing objectives while advancing ACO's strategic goal to Keep/Fix/Reuse our heritage assets, ACO is recommending the creations of:
 - A new, application based matching grant program of \$10M/year to generate new housing.
- The grant program would incentivize owners to revitalize vacant or under-utilized heritage buildings to create new housing units. A similar grant program already exists in Alberta.
- The program would create jobs as renovation is labour intensive, and materials are generally locally sourced. A boost to local economies.
- More information can be found in the attachment and at:
https://acontario.ca/show_news.php?nid=105

Status/ Staff Comment

- A provincial grant program as suggested by ACO would be beneficial for increasing the housing supply and renovating existing heritage properties.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

That Heritage Markham supports the creation of a Heritage Building Grant for Housing as advocated by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) and recommends Markham Council support the ACO initiative.

Attachment

2025 Campaign: Heritage Helping Housing Grant

AUTHOR: ACO

DATE: February 18, 2025

The huge potential of Ontario's older buildings for housing solutions

NEWS DESCRIPTION:

Last year, ACO mounted a successful campaign that led to a two-year extension of the time frame for designating buildings on municipal heritage lists.

This year's campaign addresses the **housing crisis** and how buildings we value – through thoughtful adaptive reuse and careful renovation – can provide needed housing units. The campaign also focuses on using Canadian resources – labour and materials – to provide for a more sustainable future. A Canada First approach!

The "ask" is simple: \$10M/yr in matching funds for adaptive reuse and renovation that creates more housing.

A TWO-PART CAMPAIGN

There are two parts to the campaign – pre-election discussions with those running for provincial parliament – and post-election discussions with those elected as MPPs.

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

For the first part of the campaign, you can talk with those running for provincial parliament in your riding. ACO will provide all the information you will need, including a training session (contact alex@acountario.ca for more information).

Here is a possible question for candidates, whether at your door or at an all candidates meeting:

"Given that

- we desperately need more housing
- renovation creates more jobs, is more labour intensive, than new construction
- renovating an existing building means we don't have to create new streets and other infrastructure

Will you push for a grant to turn underused existing buildings, including heritage buildings, into housing?"

For the second part of the campaign, you can talk with the elected MPP in your riding. ACO will also provide the information you will need. (Details to follow after the election.) You can also promote the campaign more widely in your community – ACO will have more suggestions for tactics here too.

TRAINING SESSION

On Thursday, February 13, ACO held an information session on the campaign. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

NEXT STEPS

Decide to be part of the campaign and indicate your participation to Alex MacKinnon (alex@acountario.ca). Then contact those running in your riding, set up a time to talk – or offer to send information about the “ask.” Report back to Alex re: your contact(s) and actions as this information will feed into the post-election part of the campaign.

CALL TO ACTION

We are counting on ACO members – and our cultural heritage friends – to make our CAMPAIGN 2025 a success. Our “ask” responds to all 17 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

For questions about the campaign, please contact:

Dan Schneider, ACO Policy Committee Chair - danschneider@live.ca

Deb Crawford, ACO Chair - president@acountario.ca

.

.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS: (Adobe PDFs)

- [ACO Keep Fix Reuse 2025.pdf](#)
- [Heritage Helping Housing Building Grant 2025 - One-Pager.pdf](#)
- [Heritage Helping Housing Building Grant 2025 - Proposal.pdf](#)
- [Question for Candidates.pdf](#)