

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date	Tuesday, June 11, 2024
Subject	Advocacy for an Extension to the Municipal Register Deadline

Recommendation

1. That the Mayor sign and send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, and Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, on behalf of City Council requesting that Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act be amended to extend deadline for the removal of non-designated properties from the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties for five years from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

At the May 6, 2024 meeting of Heritage Guelph, the committee passed a motion requesting staff prepare a report seeking authorization for the Mayor to sign and send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, and Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, requesting that Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act be amended to extend deadline for the removal of non-designated properties from the [Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties](#) (the Register) for five years from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030.

Key Findings

Heritage Guelph and heritage planning staff are of the opinion that it is not feasible to properly evaluate the 1,722 non-designated properties listed in the Register for designation prior to the January 1, 2025 deadline. Extension of the deadline to January 1, 2030 would permit staff to conduct a fulsome evaluation of all non-designated properties. Five additional years would give heritage planning staff the opportunity to better plan, resource, and undertake this complex exercise.

At a special Council meeting on November 22, 2022 when Bill 23 was presented to Council, staff highlighted the concerns as well as in a [letter to the Province on December 9, 2022](#).

Strategic Plan Alignment

The key findings and recommendations of this report align with 2024-2027 Strategic Plan priority 6.1.4 to conserve our cultural heritage resources.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Grow and care for our community space and places

Financial Implications

None.

Report

The Build More Homes Faster Act, passed by the Province of Ontario in December 2022, made changes to the Ontario Heritage Act that will require municipalities to remove all non-designated heritage properties from municipal registers unless designated prior to January 1, 2025. Properties removed from the register cannot be re-listed for another five years. This change affects some 36,000 listed heritage properties in Ontario, according to the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. In Guelph, there are 1,722 non-designated properties listed on the Register, meaning over 80% of Guelph's identified heritage properties will be vulnerable to demolition unless designated by December 31, 2024.

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) initiated a campaign in February 2024 requesting that the Province of Ontario extend the deadline for removal of non-designated properties from municipal registers from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030, to permit municipalities the time required to evaluate non-designated properties for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. Since February, numerous Ontario municipalities have submitted letters to Premier Ford and the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Michael Ford, supporting the ACO'S request, including the Cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Markham, Halton Hills, and Windsor, among others.

Heritage planning staff and Heritage Guelph have been working to evaluate as many non-designated listed properties as possible prior to the January 1, 2025, deadline. In 2023, City Council passed more individual designation bylaws than any year since 1989. In 2024, Heritage planning staff are working on the Ontario Reformatory Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines, the Downtown Guelph Heritage Conservation District Study, the Ward West Heritage Conservation District Study, and [Heritage Guelph's 2024 Individual Designation Priorities](#). Despite these efforts, most non-designated properties listed in the Register will lose heritage status at the end of the year, including many historically significant properties that would meet the provincial [criteria for designation](#). The removal of non-designated properties from the Register in less than seven months will encourage demolition of existing and affordable housing alternatives.

Heritage planning staff support the proposed five-year extension to the removal of non-designated properties from the Register. Five additional years would give heritage planning staff the opportunity to better plan, resource, and undertake the evaluation of Guelph's valued heritage resources for protection under Parts IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Financial Implications

None.

Consultations and Engagement

On May 6, 2024 Heritage Guelph [passed the following motion](#):

THAT Heritage Guelph requests staff prepare a report for the June 11, 2024 Council Planning meeting, seeking authorization for the Mayor to sign and send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, and Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, requesting that Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act be amended to extend the above-noted deadline for five years from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030.

It is important to note that since the Heritage Guelph motion, the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism posted to the [Environmental Registry of Ontario \(ERO\)](#), proposed legislation that would extend the deadline to issue a notice of intention to designate from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2027. The consultation period ends on June 26, 2024.

Departmental Approval

Krista Walkey, MCIP, RPP, General Manager, Planning and Building Services

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