



## Municipal Heritage Committee Report

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<b>Report Number:</b>	<b>KLMHC2025-029</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	April 3, 2025
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Historic Plaque Program</b>
<b>Description:</b>	Discussion regarding the development of a new historic plaque program
<b>Author and Title:</b>	Emily Turner, Economic Development Officer – Heritage Planning

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**Recommendations:**

**That** Report KLMHC2025-029, **Historic Plaque Program**, be received; and

**That** staff report back with a summary of the Committee’s discussion for review and next steps.

**Department Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Financial/Legal/HR/Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Administrative Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background:**

The Municipal Heritage Committee's 2025 Work Plan includes an action item to develop and implement a new heritage plaquing program. At present, the City administers one plaque program for designated heritage buildings. These plaques, which are provided by the City to designated heritage property owners for installation on their buildings, are small bronze plaques which include the name or address of the building, its date of construction, and its identification as a heritage property. This is a longstanding program which has its root in several of Kawartha Lakes' predecessor municipalities and continued with Heritage Victoria, the former name of the Kawartha Lakes Municipal Heritage Committee. The majority of designated properties in the City have these plaques installed on them and new plaques are ordered for designated properties as they are designated.

The idea for an expanded plaque program that includes plaques with historical information and storytelling has been discussed by the Municipal Heritage Committee, staff and members of the public for several years. There is demand and interest in the community for these types of plaques to tell the stories of different historic sites across Kawartha Lakes. Further, the new Economic Development Strategy expresses the importance of storytelling and celebration of place through its Objective 4.4: Lead, partner and foster heritage conservation. The new plaque program would advance Starting Action 3 under this objective (Lead heritage outreach programming to celebrate connection to, and importance of, place) and broadly align with other cultural heritage programming at the City, including the Moments and Memories program under the Curatorial Services portfolio.

A review of other municipalities in Ontario shows that there are a range of different heritage plaque programs including those for designated properties similar to the City's existing bronze plaques as well as those with larger plaques or interpretive panels that include photographs and storytelling about historic places, including those which are still in existence and those which are not. There are a wide variety of specifications for this latter category of plaque, largely dependant on the materials and scope of material included on them. Given the existing budget for this program, as noted below, the new plaques would likely be of a size to be able to accommodate 200-300 words of text along with 2-3 photographs of the building or location.

The report is intended to be a starting place for the Committee to brainstorm ideas about how a plaque program will function, including its objective and how sites are chosen for a plaque.

### **Rationale:**

This heritage plaquing program will be a new initiative for the City and will require a framework and program guidelines for transparency, consistency and long-term viability. To start the development of that framework, the Committee may want to discuss the following:

- What types of historic sites will be eligible for a plaque?
- How will sites be identified?
- How will the community be involved in nominating and selecting sites?
- What are the Committee's priorities for the launch of the program in 2025?
- How will the program be publicized and marketed?

Once the Committee has brainstormed some ideas around this potential program, staff will compile the ideas and next steps for presentation back to the Committee at its next meeting. Staff will also initiate internal discussion with other departments to align this program with other City initiatives, such as the upcoming Signage Strategy and plaquing and interpretive panels that are developed by other City divisions, such as for infrastructure projects and new development. Heritage staff have also been discussing the plaque program with Communications and Marketing staff regarding the design of the plaque, alignment with accessibility and branding guidelines, and longevity. A draft plaque design is being developed by Communications staff and will be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

### **Other Alternatives Considered:**

The Committee could choose not to pursue this initiative. However, the development of a plaquing program has been identified as an action item in the Committee's 2025 work plan.

### **Financial/Operation Impacts:**

A budget of \$10,000 has been allocated to this project from the 2025 Heritage Planning advertising budget. Based on early cost estimates, staff anticipate this will allow the production and installation of three plaques in 2025 to launch the program. More

detailed budget will be presented to the Committee at a later date once more detailed specifications for the plaques have been developed.

**Consultations:**

Economic Development  
Communications and Marketing

**Attachments:**

N/A

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