



Municipal Heritage Committee Report

Report Number: KLMHC2025-044
Meeting Date: June 5, 2025
Title: Historic Plaque Program
Description: Discussion regarding the development of a new historic plaque program
Author and Title: Emily Turner, Economic Development Officer – Heritage Planning

Recommendations:

That Report KLMHC2025-044, **Historic Plaque Program**, be received;

That the proposed plaque design be approved;

That that a public engagement page on Jump In be launched and community engagement sessions be planned and executed; and

That staff report back to the Committee in fall 2025 with the results from the public engagement and an draft program outline for review.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

At its meeting of April 17, 2025, the Municipal Heritage Committee began preliminary discussions regarding the development of a new plaque program. This item has been identified as a priority action item on the Committee's 2025 workplan. The intention of the program is to develop a new plaque program to complement the existing designation property plaque program that will commemorate other sites in the City and offer an opportunity for interpretation, including text and pictures, that is not currently part of the designated property plaque program.

This program is being developed after expressions of interest for a program of this type from both the Municipal Heritage Committee and the broader community which has often reached out to staff to ask if such a program was available or could be developed. There are funds in the 2025 Heritage Planning budget to develop such a program. In order to do so, a framework for how the program will operate must be developed and approved by Council. It is anticipated that 2-4 plaques per year can be developed.

At its April 17 meeting, the Committee began preliminary brainstorming and discussions regarding what the program might look like. The following is a summary of the Committee's brainstorming:

- The Committee suggested the plaques might tie into their ongoing project to commemorate and provide historical recognition to the Scugog River through Lindsay.
- The Committee discussed how the new program would fit with and be complementary to the existing bronze plaque program.
- The Committee noted that this type of program existed in many other municipalities in Ontario and was very successful for promoting and recognizing local heritage, particularly sites where the historic building or structure no longer existed or viewscapes.
- The Committee suggested that a different area of the City could be focused on each year.
- The Committee was concerned as to how suggestions from the public might be managed if there were a lot of them.
- The Committee noted that the plaques should be in accessible locations so that people could go and visit them or might come across them while they were travelling through the City.

After its brainstorming session, the Committee passed the following resolution:

KLMHC2025-042

Moved By Councillor Richardson

Seconded By J. Pitcher

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.

Carried

Staff have summarized the Committee's discussion above and brought together a set of next steps and considerations for the Committee's review and discussion. This report is intended to present the next steps for the Committee to discuss and identify further considerations that should be part of the development of this program.

Rationale:

There are a range of considerations that need to be discussed as the program is developed. These are outlined below for the Committee's review and discussion.

Program Guidelines and Policy

In order to implement the program, a report to Council will be required that includes either a heritage plaque policy or program guidelines that will guide how and when plaques are installed, what types of sites are eligible, how the nominations will work, and who is responsible for installation and upkeep. In order to take this forward to Council, staff will draft a guidelines or policy document for the Committee's review. This will take place after some of the considerations below are discussed.

Plaque Design

Communications and Heritage staff have developed several draft plaque layouts for the Committee to review. The plaque designs must adhere to City branding and accessibility requirements and the general design has been set as a rectangle with rounded edges and a circular bump-out on the top of the plaque that displays a simplified version of the City's logo. Both the blue background colour and the font are taken from the City Brand Guidelines. The plaque is approximate 25" by 21" in size to allow for them to fit in a variety of locations and keep the production costs reasonable.

Using this design, staff have mocked up several internal layouts for the plaque with different placements for text and images. The mock-ups are attached as Appendix A to this report. The mock up was done using City Hall (the Victoria County Courthouse) as an example to show what the plaque might look like with pictures and text, although there is not a plan at this time to fabricate a plaque of this type for City Hall.

Staff are currently finalizing the specifications and costing for the plaques.

Public Engagement and Consultation

In order for the program to be successful, both in the community and for Council to endorse it, there will need to be community consultation to ensure that community voices are heard and reflected in the new program and that there is buy-in to continue the program year over year.

To help engage the community, staff have developed a Jump In page to be launched in June. The Jump In page provides information to community members about current plaque programs in Kawartha Lakes as well as examples of historic plaque program similar to what the City is looking to implement from elsewhere. There is also a survey for community members to fill out which asks general questions about what a plaque program might look like including what types of sites are appropriate for plaques, how nominations might work, and how their location might be publicized.

Staff will share the draft Jump In page with the Committee at the meeting for review and discussion.

Staff are also suggesting that in-person information and engagement session be held to provide information to the community. The rationale for this is that there has been significant concern from the community regarding the transition to online engagement only. Staff found that, during the development of the AMP, the in-person community engagement and information sessions were well-received and are recommending that several information sessions be held throughout summer 2025 to ensure there is appropriate opportunities for public input.

Alignment with Other City Departments

To expand the reach of the program across City operations and to ensure that plaques that are installed in the City are consistent, heritage staff have had preliminary discussion with staff from other departments regarding the use of the plaque design for

other applications. The idea is that the plaque design will be a template for any time a heritage plaque is created by the City or as part of a City process. This may include capital projects and City-owned facilities where a plaque may be appropriate or as part of development applications, such as in instances where staff or the Municipal Heritage Committee request that a plaque or interpretive panel be installed as part of a new development. There are still additional considerations to be explored in this area but any policy or framework development will need to ensure it aligns with cross-departmental needs.

Strategic Alignment

The development of a new plaquing program must align with the Council-adopted Strategic Plan and the new Economic Development Strategy in order to advance Council priorities. Staff have reviewed both strategic documents and identified areas of alignment and highlighted areas where the program should be addressing specific Council priorities.

2024-2027 Strategic Plan

The City's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan reflects the full range of services offered by the City and sets strategic direction for program focus and implementation at a high level. The development of a new plaque program and its implementation is supported and directed by several action items in the plan.

Through the strategic priority of A Vibrant and Growing Economy, the development of a plaque program is supported through Action 1: Build economic development initiatives to support and expand existing businesses, attract new businesses and expand local employment opportunities. One aspect of these initiatives is placemaking, which heritage plaquing supports, which is intended to support tourism and making Kawartha Lakes a vibrant and interesting place to live, work and do business.

Through the strategic priority of Good Government, the strategic plan provides direction through Action 3: Build a collaborative, supportive, inclusive and equitable community. Notable, the strategy directs staff to "Enhance communication, public education and engagement opportunities" which supports the implementation of a plaque program. This section of the strategy also directs collaboration with community organizations and partners which underscores the need to ensure that community partners, including individuals and local historical organizations, are involved in these types of initiatives, as

well as the need for ensuring inclusive programming that recognized the diversity of Kawartha Lakes' communities.

Economic Development Strategy

One of the key themes identified as part of the development of the Economic Development Strategy was community building through placemaking throughout all of Kawartha Lakes' communities. The strategy also identified building partnerships and working collaboratively as a key pillar in local economic development, including placemaking initiatives. Historic plaquing programs have traditionally be used as one aspect of placemaking in communities, like Kawartha Lakes, that have significant historic assets.

Placemaking is prioritized through Strategic Priority 4: Invest in Places of Cultural and Economic Activity. Plaquing is specifically supported through the following objectives;

- Objective 4.1: Identify, lead and partner on place-making opportunities to attract residents, visitors and businesses.
- Objective 4.4: Lead, partner and foster heritage conservation.

The development of a new heritage plaque program will support the implementation of these objectives. However, the strategy's focus on partnership building should also find its way into the final program guidelines and open the door to collaboration with community members and local heritage organizations who have been requesting the development of a plaque program for a number of years.

Next Steps

The next steps to develop the plaque program are as follows:

- Undertake public consultation
- Continue to discuss plaque use across other departments
- Report back and review feedback from public consultation
- Finalize budget and costing

Staff are recommending that a report back to the Committee be made in September 2025 to allow an appropriate amount of time for community consultation.

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:

Communications and Marketing
Manager, Economic Development
Economic Development Officer – Curatorial Services
Economic Development Officer – Arts and Culture
Policy Planning Supervisor
(Acting) Development Supervisor
Building and Property Staff

Attachments:

Appendix A – Plaque Design Mock-Ups



Adobe Acrobat
Document

Department Head email: lbarrie@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Leah Barrie, Director of Development Services