



Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Program Requirements

1. Program Description

The Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Program (CHFIP) is a contribution pilot program intended to assist eligible property owners of designated heritage properties with conservation, accessibility, and/or beautification projects. The objective is to encourage private investment in the revitalization of the Bank Street corridor as part of the broader revitalization efforts in Centretown. Through aesthetic façade improvements such as storefront signage, exterior lighting, commercial storefront improvements and heritage conservation projects such as masonry conservation, private property owners can help contribute to a vibrant Bank Street. These efforts will help reinforce a special sense of place along Bank Street as a historic main street in the downtown core.

The CHFIP will provide contributions for the purposes of the City of Ottawa Grants and Contributions Policy. Contributions (referred to as grants for ease of understanding) are conditional transfer payments to an individual or organization that are subject to being accounted for or audited. The program will run until the end of 2026 unless extended by City Council and is based on availability of funding. The program is administered by Right of Way, Heritage, and Urban Design within the Planning, Development and Building Services Department.

2. Program Goals

1. **Heritage Conservation:** encourage the restoration and conservation of heritage buildings that contribute to Centretown's sense of place
2. **Beautification:** improve the visual attractiveness of storefronts to create a more inviting environment for customers and visitors.
3. **Improved Accessibility:** support upgrades that make properties more accessible for all users.

3. Definitions

CHFIP: Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Program

Designated Heritage Property: A property designated under Part IV or V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Contributing Properties: Properties designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, located within a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) that have been determined to contribute to the heritage character of the District. These properties may be listed as Category 1,2,3 or Contributing in the respective HCD documentation.

Cultural Heritage value: The historic, design or contextual significance for past, present or future generations. The heritage value of an historic resource is embodied in its heritage attributes.

Heritage Attributes: Those attributes of a property that reflect its heritage value. Attributes may include architectural elements, landscape features, or building location.

Restoration: The action or process of accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of a historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value

Rehabilitation: The action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of a historic place or an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

Preservation: The action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the existing materials, form, and integrity of a historic place or of an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

Right of Way: The travelled portion of public streets, as well as the border area, which may include any sidewalks, boulevards, traffic circles or medians.

Public Realm: The publicly owned places and spaces that belong to, and are accessible by, everyone. These can include municipal streets, lanes, squares, plazas, sidewalks, parks, open spaces and civic buildings and institutions.

4. Program Boundaries and Property Eligibility

Owners of properties designated under Part IV of the OHA or owners of Contributing or Grade 1-3 properties designated under Part V of the OHA within the boundaries shown in the Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Pilot Program Map.

5. Project Eligibility and Types of Work

All projects must conform to heritage standards and City Bylaws, such as but not limited to the Permanent Signs on Private Property By-law (No. 2016-326) and HCD By-laws.

Applicants must discuss their projects with City staff prior to applying. City staff will then determine the eligibility of the project, provide technical advice and assist with the application process.

There are two categories of eligible projects:

Category 1: Beautification

This category is aimed at improving the aesthetics of commercial storefronts in the program area to contribute to the historic character and visual continuity of commercial buildings in the Centretown Heritage Conservation District and Bank Street Heritage Conservation District. Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- New signage that meets the City's Permanent Signs on Private Property By-law
- New lighting to externally illuminate new signage or highlight architectural features of historic buildings.
- Removal of inappropriate building elements such as signage, security bars, inappropriate cladding, inappropriate paint, etc.
- Building improvements such as ramps, railings and/or accessible door openers that meet Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards while also complying with the Standards and Guidelines for Historic Places in Canada and the HCD Plan

Category 2: Heritage Conservation

This category is aimed at restoring and conserving the Contributing properties within the program area. Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Storefront conservation or restoration including windows, doors, sign bands, transom windows, bulkheads, awnings
- Structural improvements necessary for continued use
- Restoration of heritage attributes such as repointing brick and stone or restoration of windows, sills, cornices, storefront features and doors.

- Reinstatement or replacement of heritage attributes that have been lost or deteriorated beyond repair.
- Masonry cleaning
- Repainting of appropriate elements
- Other projects that meet the definition of conservation or restoration in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*

***Other costs such as architectural or design fees, engineering fees or other technical studies may be eligible when related to an eligible project that receives funding through the program.*

Ineligible projects include:

- Work that has already been started at the time of application. No retroactive funding is available.
- Technical studies such as building condition assessments where the building is proposed for demolition.
- Ongoing building maintenance that is the normal responsibility of a property owner such as painting.
- Interior work
- Projects that have already received Heritage Grant funding through the Heritage Property Grant Program

6. Application Requirements

Applications for the program require:

1. A meeting with City staff in advance of a formal application. This meeting will be used to discuss requirements, prioritization, and phasing of projects.
2. Completed application form (available on the City of Ottawa website).
3. Photographs of the building and area(s) where work is being proposed.
4. Copies of at least two quotes for the work that will be completed.

Note: Given the occasional challenges in finding appropriate tradespeople, exceptions to the requirement for two quotes may be made at staff's discretion if the applicant demonstrates efforts to obtain additional quotes.

5. If the property owner wishes to complete some or all of the work themselves, a detailed quote must be submitted regarding material costs.

Providing incomplete or insufficient information may result in an application being denied.

7. Approval Process

All applications will be reviewed by the Planning, Development and Building Services Department staff who will submit their recommendations for funding allocation to the Program Manager, Heritage Planning Branch. The Program Manager, Heritage Planning Branch and the Program Manager, Public Realm and Urban Design Branch shall have the delegated authority to review and provide final approval to contributions under the Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Program provided that such allocations,

a) collectively, do not exceed the value of the budget provision approved for such contributions; and,

If the applications received exceed the available budget, priority will be based on a first come first served basis.

The decision of the Planning, Development and Building Services Department is final, and applicants will receive a letter notifying them of the result of their application. If the grant is approved, the letter will contain the amount of the grant, a contribution agreement for the applicant to sign that will include the reporting requirements. If the grant is not approved, the letter will outline the reasons.

All successful applicants will be required to enter into a contribution agreement with the City of Ottawa in accordance with the City of Ottawa Grants and Contributions Policy. The Program Manager, Heritage Planning Branch will sign these agreements under the Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Program.

8. Funding Formula

The City will offer up to 75 per cent of costs to a maximum of \$75,000. If, for example, the total restoration work was \$50,000, the grant would be \$37,500, if \$100,00 the grant would be \$75,000.

If the property owner plans to complete some or all of the work themselves, grant funding will be based on 50 per cent of the cost of eligible materials. No funding will be provided for labour.

Depending on size of project, and number of applications, the grant allocation per project may be less than 50 per cent of the total cost of the project in order to provide grants to more applicants.

*** In exceptional circumstances, retroactive grant funding may be approved on an emergency basis if available.*

9. Disbursement of Funds

Once the work has been completed and paid for, the applicant must submit a project report as outlined in the contribution agreement which includes: a brief description of the project, proof of payment (copy of invoices marked paid, cancelled cheque or other appropriate proof) and photographs of the completed work to the Planning, Development and Building Services Department. Upon receipt of these documents, a City planner will schedule a site visit to verify that the work has been completed to approved restoration standards.

All work must be completed and documentation for the disbursement of grant funding submitted to the Planning, Development and Building Services Department 12 months from receiving approval.

Once all work has been verified, the City planner will request disbursement of the contribution in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contribution agreement. The payment will be issued 60 days after the completion of the Project as certified by the contractor in the Certificate of Completion.

If the property owner has started the work and cannot complete the work within 12 months of approval, a special request for an extension may be made in writing to the Planning, Development and Building Services Department. Extensions may be approved by a Program Manager, with the delegated authority to sign agreements under the Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Program.

10. Monitoring

The program will run until the end of 2026 unless extended by City Council.

Minor amendments to these Program Guidelines in relation to changes in City policy, procedures or changes to legislation or administration of the Pilot Program may be implemented by staff without requiring Council approval.

Any substantive changes such as updates to funding maximums, overarching program priorities or any other modifications that significantly alter the program's scope or objectives, will require Council approval.