Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – May 6, 2026

REPORTS

Item No. 2 Promoting Adaptive Reuse and Preservation of Heritage

WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 7, 2025, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development concurred in the recommendation of the Riel Community Committee.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 29, 2025, the Riel Community Committee passed the following motion:

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg has repeatedly used the statement that "the greenest building is the one that is already standing";

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg staff are in the initial stages of undertaking a comprehensive zoning by-law review process, scheduled for consideration in 2027;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg will be unable to meet its climate action goals without utilizing the embodied energy in existing structures instead of carting them off to the landfill;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg has mentioned "heritage" only in passing (ex. FAQ document November 2023 for 4 plex developments) in the initial "buckets" of zoning reforms arising out of the Housing Accelerator Fund process;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development be requested to direct the Winnipeg Public Service to meet with the Climate Action and Resilience Committee and report back in 180 days on the following:

1. Promoting the "adaptive re-use" of existing residential buildings as an alternative to demolition and disposition in the City landfill, including in mature communities and within newer areas as well.

2. Cross jurisdictional research of heritage development agreements whereby preservation of existing buildings can be encouraged through providing land use incentives.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Promoting Adaptive Reuse and Preservation of Heritage

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
J. Veitch	H. Borys	N/A	J. Dunford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explains options for Winnipeg to promote the adaptive reuse of buildings. Adaptive reuse helps the city:

- reduce waste and embodied carbon;
- protect historic places; and
- add more housing options.

Winnipeg already has some tools to support adaptive reuse. These include heritage by-laws, zoning rules, and grants. These tools are helpful, but they are limited and could be improved.

City staff reviewed adaptive reuse programs in Halifax, Calgary, Vancouver, and Montreal. These cities use a mix of incentives and regulations like:

- flexible zoning rules in exchange for restoration;
- density transfers and bonuses for conservation;
- single unit to multi-unit house conversions beyond four units; and
- rules that make it harder to demolish older character houses.

City staff met with the Climate Action and Resilience Committee (CARC). They discussed these tools and programs from other cities.

The Zoning Bylaw Rewrite underway could consider some of these tools and programs. Others would need new by-laws and more staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That this report be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On November 7, 2025, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development concurred in the recommendation of the Riel Community Committee, and directed the Winnipeg Public Service to meet with the Climate Action and Resilience Committee and report back in 180 days on the following:

1. Promoting the “adaptive re-use” of existing residential buildings as an alternative to demolition and disposition in the City landfill, including in mature communities and within newer areas as well.

2. Cross jurisdictional research of heritage development agreements whereby preservation of existing buildings can be encouraged through providing land use incentives.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications arising from receiving this report as information.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

On January 8 and 26, 2026, the Public Service met with the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee (HBRC) and the Climate Action and Resilience Committee (CARC) respectively. The Public Service presented cross-jurisdictional research on ways to promote the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Both committees were supportive of expanding Winnipeg’s toolkit to promote adaptive reuse. The committees provided feedback, which has been integrated into this report accordingly. See Appendix A to view CARC’s full feedback.

What does Adaptive Reuse Mean?
Adaptive reuse means the process of retrofitting an existing building to accommodate a new or expanded use. It can include general repairs, the construction of an addition, and upgrades for energy efficiency, accessibility, and to meet building code requirements or equivalencies. Related to heritage conservation, adaptive reuse is referred to as “rehabilitation.” Rehabilitation also includes actions to preserve and restore elements of the building that represent its architectural and historical significance. Adaptive reuse extends the usable lifespan of a building. It is a viable alternative to demolition. This report focuses on the adaptive reuse of a building to multi-family residential uses.

Why is Adaptive Reuse Important?

Climate Resilience

The adaptive reuse of buildings is aligned with environmental resilience goals from *OurWinnipeg 2045*. Most of a building’s carbon footprint is created during the extraction, production, and transport of its building materials. Adaptive reuse retains the carbon that was already spent on materials and construction. This is referred to as embodied carbon. Further to this, the reuse of buildings diverts waste from the landfill. When buildings are demolished,

carbon-intensive materials are discarded. This wastes the materials along with the energy and emissions that were already invested in producing them.

Adaptive reuse supports climate action, but it is only one part of the lifecycle of a building. It is also important to select low-carbon intensive renovation materials and energy efficient building systems that consider human health and comfort. The City of Winnipeg's *Community Investment Energy Roadmap* provides guidance related to building retrofits and climate resilience.

Heritage Value

Heritage value means the reasons that a place is architecturally and historically significant. These include its association with an important person or event, its cultural or architectural merit, and its integrity, which means intactness. The character-defining elements of a building are the physical features that represent its heritage value. Not all places with heritage value are formally designated or protected. Retaining and restoring existing buildings and their character-defining elements helps preserve the heritage value of a neighbourhood streetscape, even if the buildings have yet to be formally designated. Buildings with heritage value are a tangible connection to local history and collective memory.

Variety of Housing Options

The adaptive reuse of an existing building to multi-family residential can unlock a wide range of housing types within already serviced areas. This can help make better use of existing infrastructure within a compact urban form. An increase in housing stock can help address housing affordability and demand.

Some cities offer incentives for the creation of units with 3-bedrooms and beyond. Within the context of downtown conversions, this would allow larger families to live in the vibrant urban core area.

Winnipeg's Current Toolkit Related to Adaptive Re-use

The City of Winnipeg currently has some by-laws and programs that regulate and incentivize the adaptive reuse of buildings. These are described below. Although we have some tools to promote adaptive reuse, these could be expanded on.

Regulatory Tools

The Historical Resources By-law prohibits the demolition of a listed historical resource, which can be a structure, building, or land. There are over 360 listed historical resources. Criteria for designation includes that a resource is at least 40 years old and embodies outstanding heritage value. Listed historical resources can include a range of building types and styles. Some examples include early 20th century Romanesque warehouses and Victorian houses and mid to late 20th century Modern office buildings and libraries. This by-law also encourages the conservation of properties that are on the commemorative list, although there are no restrictions on demolition.

The Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD) By-law regulates the demolition of resources within an HCD. To qualify, an area must be of special architectural and historical significance, and 50 percent of its character-defining elements must be at least 40 years old. Through the

development of an HCD plan, design guidelines are set out to ensure that alterations to existing buildings and the design of new developments are compatible with the HCD. There are currently two HCDs – Armstrong's Point and Crescentwood-Enderton Park – both of which are historic residential neighbourhoods.

Within the Zoning By-law, adaptive reuse to multi-family residential isn't explicitly addressed; however, it is possible. Through blanket rezoning to support the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, the Winnipeg Zoning By-law 200/2006, under Schedule AC, permits four residential units as of right on lands zoned "R1", "R2", and "RMF-S". So, an owner may convert a single-family residential building to a duplex, triplex, and fourplex without requiring a rezoning or variances. This By-law also has a provision that allows non-conforming side yard setbacks for rear yard additions to an existing residential building. As such, the building footprint can be extruded to create additional units even if the side yard setbacks don't conform. In addition to the Schedule AC rules, an owner of a single-family dwelling may establish an attached or detached secondary suite, which includes the possibility of adapting existing structures to accommodate the secondary suite.

A disincentive for adaptive reuse has been identified in the Winnipeg Zoning By-law. Section 27 provides that where a non-conforming use or structure has been abandoned, vacant, or unoccupied for twelve consecutive months, it may not be re-occupied except in full conformity with the zoning by-law. In practical terms, this affects many older dwellings that were lawfully constructed with non-conforming features such as reduced yards or other dimensional deficiencies. If such a dwelling remains vacant for more than twelve consecutive months, its legal non-conforming status is lost. When the owner later seeks to re-occupy the dwelling, a Development Permit is required. This triggers a zoning review, which identifies any non-conforming conditions. Where those conditions no longer comply with the current Zoning By-law, the owner must obtain variances before the dwelling can be lawfully reoccupied. This creates a disincentive to reinvest in and re-occupy vacant residential buildings, as properties that were previously lawful become subject to new zoning approvals solely due to the period of vacancy.

The Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law 100/2004 permits a change of use to residential. For instance, a vacant warehouse or office building can become multi-family residential.

Incentives

The Heritage and Economic Development Incentive Program (HEDI) provides grants for the adaptive reuse of a vacant or underutilized listed historical resource. An owner receives 80 percent of the annual incremental municipal taxes for 10 years after occupancy.

The Gail Parvin Hammerquist Fund City-Wide Program Capital Projects Grants provide matching grants of up to $50,000 for the conservation of character-defining elements of a listed historical resource. Actual approved grants are typically much lower due to annual budgets and high demand.

CentreVenture Development Corporation administers grant programs related to the adaptive reuse and residential conversion of vacant and underutilized listed historical resources in the downtown.

Limitations

There are some limitations with respect to adaptive re-use and increased density. Clause 8 of the Province of Manitoba Environment Act states that the frequency and volume of overflows cannot increase due to new or upgraded land development. This means that if a developer plans to add additional residential units to a property, the sewer flows cannot increase beyond current flows at the lower-intensity use. This often limits development viability or significantly increases costs of managing water storage on site in a compliant manner.

When adapting heritage buildings for new uses, it can prove challenging to meet the prescriptive Building Code regulations. The Winnipeg Building By-law and the Manitoba Building Code (MBC) allow for some discretion by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) as to what extent of current Code compliance should be applied. Most importantly, if a building is altered or repaired, the level of life safety and building performance cannot be decreased. The Public Service may consider pursuing an Alternative Solution to full compliance with the current Code. The Richardson Report, for example, is an AHJ generated template for this type of conversion, intended for changes in Occupancy Group for heritage buildings, such as a former Warehouse converted to Office or Residential use. This option can allow for the alterations to be compliant while maintaining the heritage value of the building. Bespoke Alternative Solutions are also routinely considered. These include rationale and supporting evidence that life or property would not be jeopardized by renovations that vary from the Code but still meet the intent.

Winnipeg Zoning By-law Schedule AC allows for up to 4 residential units on a single lot, but this depends on lot width. Any proposed changes may consider lot widths to determine appropriate additional units above 4. Parking relaxations may also be necessary and an incentive.

Cross Jurisdictional Review

The Public Service has undertaken cross jurisdictional research to better understand how adaptive reuse is promoted in select Canadian cities. The research focused on a combination of regulatory and low-cost incentives, such as land use incentives. Cash grants and tax credits were excluded from the research.

The cities of Halifax, Vancouver, and Calgary were selected because they offer a range of land use incentives to promote the adaptive reuse of both heritage and non-heritage buildings. They also have regulatory means to discourage the demolition of character homes.

Some of these programs and regulations require more human resources than others to develop and administer. While some are governed by zoning or land-use by-laws, others require individual by-laws or legal agreements. Public hearings are typically required for development approvals that require variances. Based on the findings of the research, some of these mechanisms could be considered during the Comprehensive Zoning By-law review.

See Appendix B for a table that shows the requirements for implementing tools to promote adaptive reuse in other cities.

<u>The City of Halifax</u>

Heritage Development Agreements

The City of Halifax uses Heritage Development Agreements (HDAs) to promote the adaptive reuse of a designated heritage building. These are legally binding, negotiated contracts between

the property owner and the municipality. They offer flexibility and additional development rights in exchange for heritage conservation. An HDA can:

- Encourage the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and reduce demolitions
- Help offset the costs of owning and maintaining a heritage building
- Add to the amount of housing options in well-serviced areas

Some zoning restrictions that can be relaxed through an HDA include those related to uses, setbacks, height, lot coverage, parking, and density.

One of the enabling policies for HDAs is that the investment into the conservation of the heritage building must be commensurate with the additional development rights awarded through the agreement. The City of Halifax uses a proprietary calculator to help determine this. The calculator factors in blank slate development rights of the site versus the constraints of building adjacent to a heritage building to come up with a target value for heritage conservation investment.

The project must follow adopted heritage restrictions, and it requires a heritage permit.

The HDA and related heritage permit must be approved by Council at respective meetings. As such, the approval process can take approximately 6-18 months, depending on demand.

See Appendix C for examples of HDA projects.

Regional Centre Land-Use By-law

This by-law contains provisions that encourage the adaptive reuse of existing single-family residential buildings. It permits the conversion of these types of buildings into multi-family residential with no cap on the number of units. Conditions include that the existing building must be retained and that its height must not increase. This helps retain the existing house and the appearance of the streetscape.

The by-law also allows the construction of a rear yard addition that is around the same size and with similar side yard setbacks to the existing building. The addition must enable the existing house to have additional housing units.

These provisions apply to existing residential buildings regardless of heritage status. They enable additional residential density through adaptive reuse.

Bonus Zoning

In certain areas, if a developer plans to build more than 2000 square metres, which is the permitted maximum, they must contribute to the public benefit fund. This is referred to as bonus zoning. This includes contributions towards affordable housing or amenity space. If the project involves a heritage building with an HDA, then the contribution can go towards the restoration of the heritage building.

<u>The City of Calgary</u>

Direct Control By-law 273D2017, Bridgeland
The intent of this by-law is to incentivize the retention of existing "character homes" in the residential area of Bridgeland by offering a slight boost in buildable area, discretionary zoning relaxations, and more varied live-work and home-based business options. Discretionary zoning relaxations include building setbacks, lot coverage, height, and parking to accommodate the retention of the character home.

A "character home" means a house that is on the inventory of evaluated resources, municipally designated or meets certain criteria. These criteria include that the home was constructed prior to 1945 and retains a degree of its original form and architectural elements, especially those that face a public right of way.

However, once blanket rezoning was introduced, there was not much uptake on this by-law. The City of Calgary has since repealed blanket rezoning and is working on a new zoning by-law. The draft new zoning by-law includes land use incentives for retaining a heritage building. These incentives include more varieties of uses and more permissive setbacks and lot coverage when building an addition to a character home.

Heritage Density Transfers

Within certain areas of Calgary, heritage density transfers may occur. These areas typically have high land value and are already upzoned for large-scale developments. Within these areas, an owner may agree to designate a heritage building in exchange for the ability to sell the unused development rights of the heritage property to another site within the area. These development rights are described as density and are measured in Floor Area Ratio. The unused density is the difference between how large the existing heritage building is and the maximum allowable size for a building on that property. The heritage building property is called the "source" site and the new development property is called the "receiver" site. If they choose to perform City-approved conservation work on their historic building, an owner can also generate bonus density that can be transferred and sold from the site.

A density transfer transaction is formalized into a municipal by-law. Although the City administers the process, it is up to the properties owners to set pricing and negotiate the transfer.

See Appendix D for an illustration of a Heritage Density Transfer.

Heritage Guideline Area

Heritage Guideline Areas (HGA) are amendments to local area plans for certain neighbourhoods where at least 25 percent of the building stock within the area is a heritage asset. These guidelines ensure that new developments fit within the heritage character of the area. HGAs are very similar to Winnipeg's Heritage Conservation Districts.

<u>The City of Vancouver</u>

Character Retention Program

In 2018, the Zoning and Development By-law introduced land-use incentives in low density residential areas to promote the retention of character homes and to provide increased options

for housing choice. A character home is defined as one built before 1940 with special street-facing architectural features. It can also be built after 1940, but it must have a degree of architectural significance.

Prior to development, a character merit assessment of the front and street-facing sides of the house is completed. The assessment determines whether the house meets the established criteria for having character merit and if it is eligible for zoning relaxations and incentives. If it qualifies, at least 40 percent of the primary structure, mainly its street-facing walls, original roofline, and distinctive architectural features are expected to be retained or restored. In exchange for character retention, the owner can:

- Add additional floor area to their existing home
- Convert the home into multiple units, called a multiple conversion dwelling
- Build a detached infill home in the rear yard off the lane
- Rent or strata-title dwelling units in the infill or multiple conversion dwelling

See Appendix E for an example of a Character Retention project.

Heritage Revitalization Agreements

Like Halifax's Heritage Development Agreements, Vancouver's Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRA) are a legally binding agreement negotiated by the City and the owner of a heritage property. The owner agrees to restore, preserve, and protect the building and/or specified heritage features. In exchange, the City will vary zoning restrictions including use, density, subdivision, and siting regulations. This allows an owner more freedom to adapt or modernize the heritage building to suit their needs.

An HRA is tailored to suit each property on a case-by-case basis. Any variances under an HRA must be approved by Council. Projects require a heritage permit. An HRA is formalized through site-specific amendment to the Zoning and Development By-law.

Heritage Density Transfers

Like Calgary, Vancouver also has a Heritage Density Transfer program. However, in Vancouver, an owner must complete conservation work on the heritage building prior to selling density to another site. The City of Vancouver also manages an inventory of density for sale on their website.

See Appendix F for an example of a Heritage Revitalization Agreement and Density Transfer project.

Green Demolition By-law

To help manage the amount of waste going to the landfill and to promote the adaptive reuse of heritage or character buildings, the Green Demolition By-law sets out reuse and recycling requirements for the demolition of certain housing types and buildings. Listed and character single-family houses have the strictest requirements. These rates are shown in the table below.

	Reuse & Recycling Rate	Salvage Wood (tonnes)
Listed Heritage House	90%	3
Non-Listed House Types:		
Pre 1910 Non-Character Home	75%	n/a
Pre 1910 Character Home	90%	3
1910-1949 Non-Character Home	75%	n/a
1910-1949 Character Home	90%	n/a
1950+ Non-Character Home	n/a	n/a
1950+ Character Home	n/a	n/a
Listed Multifamily	n/a	n/a
Non-Listed Multi-family	n/a	n/a
Listed Commercial/Industrial	n/a	n/a
Non-Listed Commercial/Industrial	n/a	n/a

The City of Montréal

Façade Bracing

The City of Montreal has a disaster response strategy for heritage buildings that are at risk of collapse due to fire damage. Heritage planners and the fire department work together to develop a plan to stabilize the building. The authority having jurisdiction will retain an engineer for a condition assessment and stabilization plan. The owner is responsible for installing any required structural bracing. The expectation is that the facades will then be re-integrated into a new development.

See Appendix G for an example of a fire-damaged heritage building with a braced façade.

Potential Expanded Toolkit to Promote Adaptive Reuse in Winnipeg

For Listed Heritage Buildings

For listed heritage buildings, Winnipeg's expanded toolkit could include provisions for developing Heritage Development or Revitalization Agreements like Halifax and Vancouver respectively. Possible relaxed zoning restrictions in exchange for investment in heritage conservation could include:

- boosts in density and buildable area;

- increased building height;
- reduced setback requirements;
- increased lot coverage;
- reduced parking requirements;
- relaxed secondary suite or laneway house regulations;
- subdivision and strata opportunities; and
- relaxed restrictions on permitted uses.

Heritage density transfer programs could work in certain designated areas of the city. To be effective, the area must include a combination of low-rise heritage buildings and properties that are upzoned to accommodate large scale building projects but that have a limit on building height. Some of these areas could include various sectors of the downtown or surrounding communities like Osborne Village and St. Boniface. Vancouver's program provides stronger benefits for heritage buildings because it requires actual conservation work, while Calgary's only requires that the building be designated.

A disaster stabilization program for heritage buildings that suffer extensive fire damage could help adaptively reuse and integrate salvaged components into a new development.

For Unlisted Character Houses

For unlisted character houses, the expanded toolkit could include character-home retention policies like Vancouver and Calgary's Bridgeland area. These promote the retention of historic homes and streetscapes while offering a boost in allowable density beyond 4 units and other zoning relaxations. Furthermore, restrictions on the demolition of character homes, like in Vancouver, could encourage adaptive reuse.

Since Winnipeg can already designate HCDs, additional districts could be evaluated for designation. This would add an additional layer of protection to heritage buildings within these areas. Further to this, design guidelines help ensure that new developments are compatible with historic streetscapes. As a caution, the HCD designation process is a resource-heavy undertaking and can last approximately two years. The process requires a dedicated budget and consultant support.

For all Existing Houses

Winnipeg's current Zoning By-law allows single-family homes to be replaced with up to four units without a requirement to retain the existing building. In order to promote adaptive reuse, Winnipeg could consider enabling single family house conversions and rear yard additions beyond four units, like Halifax.

The Winnipeg Zoning By-law could be amended to exempt development permits for the re-occupancy of vacant single and two-family residential buildings. This would reduce a barrier to reuse of existing housing stock, particularly where vacancy has resulted in the loss of legal non-

conforming rights under Section 27. However, the Development Permit review process currently serves a compliance function where it allows the City to identify and address site-related non-conformities, including driveway approaches that do not meet current Public Works standards. Public Works relies on the Development Permit process to require corrective measures where necessary to ensure compliant site access. Exempting Development Permits entirely would remove this compliance checkpoint. If pursued, alternative mechanisms may be required to ensure that compliance issues continue to be identified and addressed.

Summary and Next Steps

In summary, the expanded toolkit to promote adaptive reuse in Winnipeg could include the following:

- heritage development or revitalization agreements;
- single-family to multi-family residential conversions – beyond 4 units;
- rear yard house additions for multi-family – relaxed lot coverage and beyond 4 units;
- heritage density transfers;
- bonus zoning;
- green demolition by-law for heritage and character homes;
- post-fire stabilization of heritage facades;
- additional heritage conservation districts;
- create a streamlined Development Permit process for residential re-occupancy of vacant residential buildings.

During the Comprehensive Zoning By-law review, some of these mechanisms could be considered. However, some may not fit within the realm of this by-law, and there are some limiting factors to consider. Additional dedicated human resources may be required to develop and administer new programs. It may also be necessary to create planned development overlays in areas where adaptive reuse should be targeted. These could identify their existing characteristics, whether adaptive reuse should be encouraged or regulated, whether conservation design guidelines should be developed, and to what degree additional development rights could be acceptable. Limitations on adaptive reuse, such as sewer capacity or building code restrictions, should be factored in.

Although beyond the scope of this report, other items to explore related to adaptive reuse could include:

- Green building standards that promote low-carbon building materials and systems and that consider human health and comfort.
- Applying green building standards to all types of development projects and building types.
- Incentives for 3-bedroom (and larger) units to address the shortage of family-friendly, housing downtown.

All the above potential new tools would benefit from consultation with the community, developers, and industry professionals.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: March 6, 2026

Project Name:

Promoting Adaptive Reuse and Preservation of Heritage

COMMENTS:

As this report is to be received as information, there are no associated financial implications.

Mike McGinn Mar. 6, 2026
Mike McGinn, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- N/A

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Environmental Resilience, Objective 3. Promote low-carbon, energy-efficient buildings through low-energy building design, construction and retrofitting. Reduce energy demand, consumption and greenhouse gases associated with new and existing buildings, working towards carbon-neutral buildings. Provide facilitative tools, resources, and incentives, to support green building.

Environmental Resilience, Objective 4. Minimize and divert waste from landfill. Prioritize a sustainable waste management system that conserves resources, minimizes waste, creates integrated resource recovery opportunities, and mitigates greenhouse gas emissions through diversion of waste including: residential, commercial and industrial sources, organics, construction and demolition, and plastics.

2.12 Eliminate Fossil Fuel Dependence Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing and new buildings, including municipally-owned buildings and facilities, and associated infrastructure, through the promotion of renewable energy sources; energy efficiency use and performance measures; and low-carbon construction, retrofit and demolition methods that maximize the lifecycle of buildings.

2.14 Heritage Conservation - Identify, designate and conserve heritage resources and districts, including lands and artifacts significant to Indigenous Peoples, that illustrate the broad range of heritage values, as defined in Complete Communities, while supporting efforts toward carbon-neutrality, energy efficiency, and embodied carbon reduction.

2.16 Waste Minimization Improve and sustain performance of the waste reduction and diversion system.

3.7 Heritage Investment - Facilitate the economic viability of heritage conservation by working with agencies, partnerships, and government bodies, including Indigenous, Federal, and Provincial governments, to provide leadership, incentivize the conservation of heritage resources, and districts as defined in Complete Communities.

3.8 Culture and Heritage Value - Enhance the economic and cultural value of arts and heritage resources in the community, by promoting awareness, education, viable adaptive re-use, and other effective conservation tools

6.43 Heritage Conservation Conserve cultural, natural, and heritage resources and districts, as defined in Complete Communities, and Indigenous land-based practices to celebrate sense of place through community history, architecture, civic identity and cultural perspectives.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (2018) is undergoing an update, as 2022 marked the end of short-term actions of the plan. The Community Energy Investment Roadmap (2022) identifies several programs that support adaptive reuse through zero-emissions building retrofits.

Program #2: Zero-Emissions Retrofits

The following four objectives will guide the City's efforts to scale up retrofits:

1. Harness the collective market power of the demand among home/building owners.
2. Mobilize the building industry to develop innovative technical solutions to substantially improve affordable housing buildings while residents continue to live in their homes.
3. Collaborate with financial organizations to fund projects by capturing energy savings.
4. Engage regulatory agencies to support facilitation of widespread adoption.

2.1 Residential retrofit stream: The City can take an integrated approach to building retrofits that includes an envelope upgrade, the installation of a heat pump, solar PV, energy storage, and an EV charging station according to the specific circumstances of the building.

2.3 Large buildings stream: This stream will develop a customized program for multi-story retrofits including a financing strategy similar to Toronto's Better Buildings Partnership. This stream will also advance green leases to address the split incentive challenge between landlords and tenants.

2.6 Embodied carbon and refrigerants: Embodied carbon refers to the emissions associated with the production of the materials used in buildings. The City of Winnipeg can build on Vancouver's approach to require consideration of embodied carbon as part of rezoning applications. A second consideration is for refrigerants used in heat pumps, which can emit potent GHGs. The City can preferentially procure and specify refrigerants with low global warming potential.

9.1 A Circular Economy Strategy: The City will develop a circular economy strategy that focuses on the ideas of zero landfill waste and using waste as a resource.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and its Goals and Objectives, and it was determined that the PRS is not applicable to this specific report.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Planning, Property, and Development
Division: Urban Planning & Design
Prepared by: R. Ricci, Heritage Planner
Date: March 30, 2026

Attachments: Appendix A – The Climate Action and Resilience Committee's Feedback

Appendix B – Table 1, Cross-Jurisdictional Tools to Promote Adaptive Reuse: Requirements for Implementation

Appendix C – Halifax's Heritage Development Agreement (HDA), Project Example

Appendix D – Calgary Density Transfer, Illustration

Appendix E – Vancouver's Character Retention Program, Project Example

Appendix F – Vancouver's Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) and Density Transfer, Project Example

Appendix G – Montreal, Braced Façade Example

Appendix A – The Climate Action and Resilience Committee's Feedback

The Climate Action and Resilience Committee (CARC) appreciates the request for input from the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development and the Riel Community Committee. CARC thanks the City's Heritage Planner for sharing existing heritage program incentives and zoning by-law context and the jurisdictional research.

CARC is broadly supportive of the City promoting adaptive reuse to preserve heritage buildings, reduce, reuse and recycle demolition waste, increase density, revitalize downtown, and increase tools and mechanisms to do so. Adaptive reuse supports climate action, but it is only one part of the lifecycle of a building.

The City must also prioritize green building design, construction and operation and account for the embodied energy or carbon in building materials. This includes optimization of building materials, mechanical and electrical systems, and construction methods and assessing overall energy efficiency and building performance. This applies to new construction, retrofits or conversions, and decommissioning.

CARC recommends expanding the scope of the adaptive reuse research and further program exploration to:

- Apply Council approved policy on green building
- Use regulation rather than encouraging voluntary incentive programs
- Identify opportunities to develop green building standards for all building types as part of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law review
- Consider human health and comfort in adaptive reuse
- Consider permitting and enforcement processes to meaningfully integrate green buildings

CARC is available to provide additional input to support green building broadly or adaptive reuse specifically for the upcoming Comprehensive Zoning By-law review. With the support of CARCs Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, it can convene working groups that could include CARC, community subject matter experts, and the Public Service.

Appendix B – Table 1, Cross-Jurisdictional Tools to Promote Adaptive Reuse: Requirements for Implementation

Municipality/ Tool	Does it reside in a zoning by-law?	Does it have its own by-law?	Which staff are involved?	Is an amending by-law required?	Is a legal agreement required?	Is this registered on title?	Public hearing for develop-ment approval?
Halifax							
Heritage Development Agreements	No[1]	No	HP, UP, LS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Existing House Conversions Beyond 4 Units	Yes	No	UP	No	No	No	No
Existing House Rear Additions Beyond 4 Units	Yes	No	UP	No	No	No	No
Bonus Zoning	Yes	No	UP, HP, LS	No	Yes	Yes	No
Calgary							
Direct Control By-law	No	Yes	HP	No	No	Yes	No
Heritage Density Transfers	Yes	No	HP, UP, LS	Yes	No	No	Yes
Heritage Guideline Area	Yes	No	HP, UP	No	No	No	No
Vancouver							
Heritage Revitalization Agreements	No[1]	No	HP, UP, LS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Heritage Density Transfers	Yes	No	HP, UP, LS	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Character-Retention Program	Yes	No	HP, UP, LS	No	Yes	Yes	No
Green Demolition By-law	No	Yes	DB	No	No	No	No

[1] This mechanism is enabled by the municipal charter

HP = Heritage Planning UP = Urban Planning
LS = Legal Services DB = Development and Building Services

Appendix C – Halifax's Heritage Development Agreement (HDA), Project Example



5294 Inglis Street, Halifax
Architect: Fathom Studio

This project involved a heritage house that was constructed in 1891 (shown in the foreground). A non-original rear addition was approved to be demolished in the rear yard.

The zoning by-law allowed for a maximum building height of 8 meters.

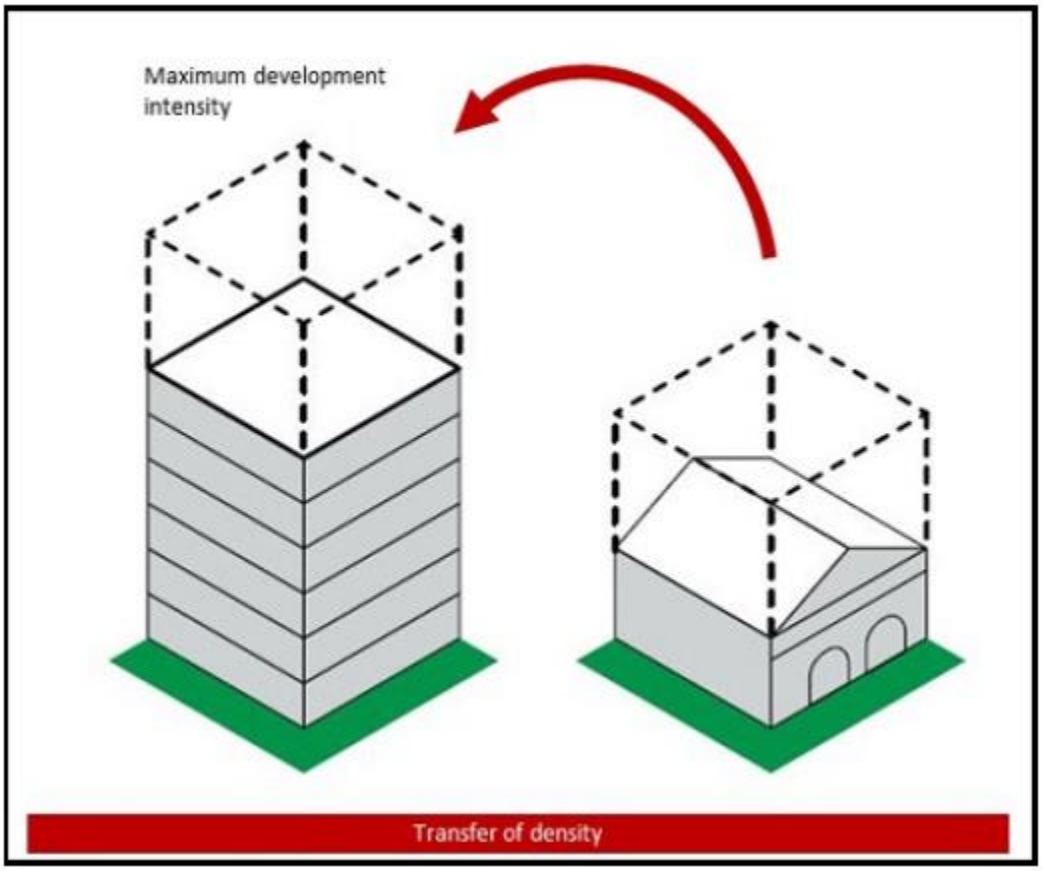
Through an HDA, the owner agreed to restore the heritage house in exchange for additional building height to 18 meters for the new attached development.

The new development follows the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. Its massing, detailing, and exterior cladding materials are visually and physically compatible with and subordinate to the heritage building.

Between the 6-storey addition and the 3-storey heritage house, a setback 5-storey section acts as an intermediate transition.

The project results in 31 housing units and 2 commercial spaces.

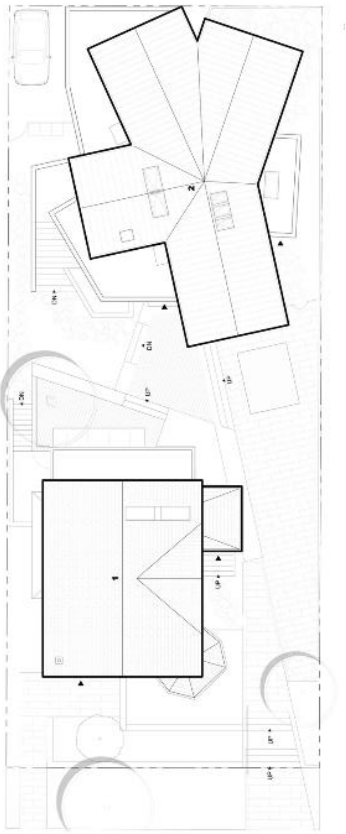
Appendix D – Calgary Density Transfer, Illustration



Density Transfer

The designated heritage building is shown on the right. It is referred to as the “source” site. The owner may sell the unused development rights to a “receiver” site in the area, shown on the left.

Appendix E – Vancouver's Character Retention Program, Project Example







Union Street House, Vancouver
Architect: MA+HG

Through the Character Retention program, this project is an example of a Missing Middle project. It allows for the retention of a character building while promoting densification and increased affordability.

The heritage home exterior was restored to its period, and its interior was renovated to contain additional units. An appropriately scaled building was constructed in the rear yard. It contains more residential units and can be strata titled.

The project respects the streetscape. Each building represents its development period.

The property was transformed from a single-family dwelling to a 5-unit development for the homeowner, her aging mother, and her extended family.

Appendix F – Vancouver's Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) and Density Transfer, Project Example





Hollywood Theatre, Vancouver
Architect: MA+HG

Through an HRA, the underutilized Hollywood Theatre was restored, and a new infill housing development was constructed adjacent to it.

The zoning by-law allowed for a maximum building height of 13.8 meters, a floor area of 4670 sq. meters, and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 3.0.

In exchange for the restoration of the theatre, variances were granted for a new six-storey concrete residential building adjacent to it. These variances include: a maximum building height of 20.7 meters, a floor area of 4972 sq. meters, and an FSR of 3.19. Through setbacks and a play on the theatre's architectural features, its design follows the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

The unused density above the theatre was transferred to the new development.

Work to the theatre included: restoration of the historic front facade, including the neon signage and lighting; the preservation and recreation of surviving original interior character-defining elements; the rehabilitation of the interior space to accommodate expanded uses, and structural, electrical, mechanical and building code upgrades.

The project results in 40 housing units and ground floor commercial spaces.

Appendix G – Montreal, Braced Façade Example

