

August 30, 2022



**ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVANCY  
ONTARIO**

## **Make an Informed Vote – Municipal Elections 2022**

The Municipal Election 2022 is upon us! Just two months until voting day Monday October 24th.

While the provincial government has overall responsibility for policy, the local municipality is the first level of decision-making in the planning processes that impact on land use, property tax levies, and local bylaws affecting our lives and our local communities now and in the future.

We need strong policies and practices to achieve our Keep-Fix-Reuse goals and we need like-minded people in our municipalities to make that a reality. Every election of our government leaders counts.

Below are a few sample questions for your consideration to help you begin the discussion with your local candidates.

### **FACE TO FACE QUESTIONS (candidate debates, doorstep visits, open forums, etc.)**

1. Will you champion for the retention, repair, and re-use of older buildings?
2. Will you champion and promote increased municipal funding to support the rehabilitation and preservation of heritage properties?
3. Do you support protecting our built heritage, through designation under the Ontario Heritage Act?
4. Do you support property tax relief for owners of designated properties?
5. How do you see yourself working with the municipality's Municipal Heritage Committee to preserve and promote our historic buildings and heritage landscapes?

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**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**  
**(sent out as questionnaires or letters to candidates)**

1 - Keep - Fix - Reuse

“The greenest building is one already built.” We know that housing - especially affordable housing - is a top issue at all levels of government. Older buildings have inherent sustainability and provide economic, environmental, and cultural value. Retaining our older buildings and investing in their repair is faster and less expensive than building new. This approach reduces carbon emissions, keeps demolition materials out of landfill and ensures that housing or other new uses has municipal services already in place.

**If elected will you champion planning decisions that support the adaptive reuse of existing building stock including heritage buildings and surplus public buildings such as schools and churches for use as affordable housing?**

**Will you advocate for the consideration of the environmental, economic, and cultural value of buildings/properties as part of the development and infrastructure processes?**

2 - Support for Listing of Heritage Properties

The Ontario Heritage Act permits municipalities to “list” properties on their Municipal Heritage Registers to flag their heritage value. While these properties may be good candidates for future designation, “listing” provides limited protection to a property by giving council 60 days from the receipt of a demolition permit application to make an informed decision about the future of the property.

**Will you support your Municipal Heritage Committee’s requests for “listing” non-designated properties on the Municipal Heritage Register?**

3 - Financial Incentives for Heritage Conservation

Rehabilitation of our heritage resources enhances the unique character of local streets and neighbourhoods, attracting business, creative enterprise, and tourism to our communities. The monies spent on this rehabilitation is usually spent locally, e.g., the repair of old windows by a local craftsperson rather than the purchase of new windows made elsewhere. Some local municipalities offer financial assistance in the form of grants to owners of designated heritage

properties, or properties in a heritage conservation district for repointing, repair of original windows, replication of front porch elements, reconstruction of a chimney, structural repairs, etc.

**Will you support motions to develop, implement, and maintain a heritage property grant program and to ensure that the grant levels are adequate?**

The Municipal Act allows municipalities to set up a heritage property tax rebate program by which owners of a designated property may apply for an annual refund of up to 40% of their property taxes. The province contributes to the cost of these programs and many municipalities have adopted them.

**Will you support the development, implementation, and maintenance of a Municipal Heritage Property Tax Relief program and ensure the funding levels are adequate?**

#### 4 - Heritage as an Environmental Priority for Municipally Owned Buildings

The wise management of our existing public building stock has compelling societal and environmental benefits. Building renewal and re-use capitalizes on materials and energy already invested, reduces construction and demolition waste (20-30 percent of landfill is building waste) and builds resilience to climate change.

**Would you give priority to the continuing use or adaptive re-use of existing municipally owned buildings (identified as heritage or not) in operations, maintenance, and capital planning?**

**If municipally owned buildings are determined to be surplus will you advocate for the building to be re-used or re-developed by future public or private sector owners?**