

## Decision Note

<b>Title:</b>	St. John's Heritage Strategic Plan 2026-2036
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	December 10, 2025
<b>Report To:</b>	Regular Meeting of Council
<b>Councillor and Role:</b>	Councillor Tom Davis, Heritage
<b>Ward:</b>	N/A

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**Decision/Direction Required:**

To approve the St. John's Heritage Strategic Plan 2026-2036.

**Discussion – Background and Current Status:**

In June 2025, the City carried out consultation on the draft Heritage Strategic Plan. Engagement opportunities included an in-person open house and interactive on-line questions on the Engage St. John's project page. Submissions received are attached for Council's review.

Feedback was relatively positive, with some suggestions for changes. A sample of the feedback received is provided below:

- There is a need for a built heritage inventory.
- There should be public notification and signage for demolition applications.
- Requests for laneway inventory, signage and design plans.
- There should be additional requirements for redevelopments on the same site as a Heritage Building.
- Some felt that it is a comprehensive proposal.
- Concerns about asking residents if they are willing to designate their building. Some felt that if a building is worthy of designation, then it should be automatically designated.
- Many would like to see more adaptive reuse of Heritage Buildings in the City.
- Preserving historic cemeteries in the City is extremely important.
- Opportunities to collaborate with Heritage NL and other agencies should include the Provincial Archaeology Office (PAO), as many areas have archaeological potential.
- Some are against including foundation repairs in the Heritage Grant, as well as considering additional height in Heritage Areas. They disagree with the idea that there should be more people living downtown.

- More is needed in the Plan to reinforce St. John's as an anchor heritage tourism attraction.
- There should be a reference to Council's previous direction to create a Growth Management Plan for the St. John's Ecclesiastical District.
- The Plan should reference protecting federally and provincially designated districts and properties.
- More money is needed for the Heritage Grants. We should not waive development fees but rather reallocate them to Heritage Grants.
- The Built Heritage Experts Panel should be required to complete the Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines training.
- A goal should be added for the City to work with the Ecclesiastical District Working Committee to develop a photo exhibit in a high-profile visitor location in the District. Further, support the installation of bronze 3D models of the District and provide road signage for the District.
- Include Parks Canada as a collaborator.
- Consider a tourism tax.
- Support the effort for UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.
- Include a section on the history of the City in the Heritage Strategic Plan.

From the feedback, the following changes have been incorporated into the Heritage Strategic Plan:

- Clarifying how the plan fits within the City's Strategic Plan, 2019-2029.
- Adding reference to the City's natural heritage in the Vision.
- Including "Conserve" in the Goal 1 title.
- Including Parks Canada and provincial departments in Action 5.5.
- Adding the following as new actions:
  - Partner with Heritage NL to conduct a built heritage inventory. This was raised by Heritage NL staff, and they have agreed to partner in this initiative.
  - Review the heritage standards for the federal districts within the City to determine if additional considerations are required. Currently the federal districts have the same standards as Heritage Areas 1 to 4. This will confirm if different standards are needed.
  - Prepare a management plan for the St. John's Ecclesiastical District. This was a directive from Council in 2021. It is now incorporated within the Heritage Strategic Plan so that it can be considered alongside other heritage initiatives.
  - Create an inventory of publicly owned laneways and determine if additional signage or wayfinding is required. This is connected to laneway policies in the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan, as well as concerns raised during other neighbourhood plan consultation.
  - Include the locations of provincially and federally designated buildings, sites and districts on the City's Neighbourhood Profile map. The City does not regulate these sites, so we cannot include them on any of the Heritage By-Law maps, but

we can include them on our Neighborhood Profile map to further promote St. John's built heritage.

Some of the feedback has not been included in the proposed changes because it is either beyond the scope of the Heritage Strategic Plan or beyond the legislative authority of the City.

Should Council agree to approve the Heritage Strategic Plan, actions will begin in 2026. The plan contains estimated budget items for Council's consideration, but the specific actions or initiatives will be costed and presented to Council each year as part of the regular budget approval process.

**Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Specific actions or initiatives will be costed and presented to Council each year as part of the regular budget approval process.
2. Partners or Interested Parties: All city residents; owners of Heritage Buildings and buildings in Heritage Areas; heritage organizations; other key stakeholders; City advisory committees.
3. Is this a New Plan, Master Plan, Strategy, Report, or Framework: Yes  
  
If yes, please select the type of document: Strategy  
  
If yes, are there recommendations or actions that require progress reporting? Yes  
  
If yes, how will progress be reported? (e.g.: through the strategic plan, through Cascade, annual update to Council, etc.): Progress will be reported through three updates to Council in alignment with the short-, medium- and long-term time frames in the Strategy.
4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:  
  
A Sustainable City: Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.  
  
An Effective City: Ensure accountability and good governance through transparent and open decision making.
5. Alignment with Adopted Plans: Envision St. John's Municipal Plan and Development Regulations; St. John's Heritage By-Law.
6. Accessibility and Inclusion: Accessibility and inclusion considerations are included in the St. John's Heritage Strategic Plan.

7. Legal or Policy Implications: Not applicable.
8. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
9. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Feedback from public engagement has been incorporated into the final version.
10. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
11. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
12. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
13. Information Management Implications: Not applicable.
14. Other Implications: Not applicable.

**Recommendation:**

That Council endorse the St. John's Heritage Strategic Plan 2026-2036 and use it as a guiding document for actions to be completed over the next ten years.

**Prepared by: Ann-Marie Cashin, MCIP, Planner III**

**Approved by: Ken O'Brien, MCIP, Chief Municipal Planner**

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	St. John's Heritage Strategic Plan 2026-2036.docx
Attachments:	- St Johns Heritage Strategic Plan - 2026-2036 - Final Web Version - Reduced File Size.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Dec 11, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Ken O'Brien - Dec 10, 2025 - 4:35 PM**

**Jason Sinyard - Dec 11, 2025 - 1:51 PM**