

# CITY OF HAMILTON

## MOTION

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR J. FARR.....**

**SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR.....**

### **City-Wide Tax Policies for Heritage Properties and the Cultural Section**

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2017, the City of Toronto passed a motion (attached hereto) requesting that the Government of Ontario work with municipalities to examine property assessments and explore tools to support the conservation of heritage properties, as well as the vibrancy of non-profit arts and culture organizations and incubators, including Municipal Property Assessment Corporation property assessment tools and processes and changes to the Ontario Culture Strategy;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton recognizes culture as an essential tool in city-building and that the conservation of significant cultural heritage resources is paramount to maintaining and enhancing Hamilton's vibrancy;

WHEREAS, a key action of the City of Hamilton Cultural Plan is to develop the capacity and sustainability of existing and emerging not-for-profit cultural organizations;

WHEREAS, the Ontario Culture Strategy encourages collaboration between federal, provincial and territorial partners on strategies to improve the socioeconomic status of artists and to improve support for culture-related infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton provides tax rebates for eligible charities and similar organizations; and,

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton offers a range of financial incentives to support the conservation, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment of heritage properties including development charge exemption, grants, loans and tax increment grants,

**THEREFORE BE RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the City of Toronto's initiative respecting the viability of heritage and arts and culture spaces, attached hereto, be supported; and,
- (b) That staff be directed to monitor any further action by the City of Toronto, or the Government of Ontario, with respect to the viability of heritage and arts and culture spaces and report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee for further direction.

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## City Council

MM24.14	ACTION			Ward:All
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### **Supporting the viability of heritage and arts and culture spaces - by Councillor Joe Cressy, seconded by Councillor Josh Matlow**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

#### **Recommendations**

Councillor Joe Cressy, seconded by Councillor Josh Matlow, recommends that

1. City Council request the Government of Ontario to work with municipalities to examine property assessment for listed and designated heritage properties, including tools that would support the conservation of heritage properties and Municipal Property Assessment Corporation property-assessment tools and processes.
2. City Council request the Government of Ontario to work with municipalities to explore opportunities to support non-profit arts and culture organizations and incubators, including property assessment tools and changes to the Ontario Culture Strategy to support the continued vibrancy of the sector.

#### **Summary**

Arts and culture are central to the fabric and vibrancy of our City. Ensuring that Toronto's arts sector continues to thrive is a critical step toward building a world-class city that is a destination for tourists and employers, and provides a great quality of life for all residents. The drivers of innovation in this field are mostly housed by small, incubator arts organizations, which provide space, support, and exposure to many independent artists, including women, people of colour, and Indigenous Torontonians

Many of these small arts organizations are in heritage buildings throughout the City, with a particularly high concentration in the Ward 20 neighbourhood of King-Spadina. Examples of this include 401 Richmond, which is a vital part of the local neighbourhood, and an important landmark in Toronto. Unfortunately, heritage assets such as 401 Richmond, and the creative organizations inside, are increasingly under threat as development pressure grows in areas such as King-Spadina.

It is critical that we protect these heritage resources through the establishment of Heritage Conservation Districts, and the use of other tools to protect these vital structures.

The City is working hard to protect and encourage the retention of heritage structures.

However, new property assessments that reflect the potential value of a new condo, completely ignoring the current use, serve as a disincentive to retain heritage. The pace at which property values continue to rise across the city is threatening not only countless heritage resources, but the survival of independent artists and cultural organizations.

As an example, 401 Richmond has taken on new life as a pillar of the creative industry. The former factory is now home to producers in this age of creativity, rather than the tapestries and products of the past. The building's unique operating model, and protection as a heritage resource, have allowed a vibrant arts and culture centre to develop. The recent Municipal Property Assessment Corporation re-assessment of the building is a serious and urgent new challenge, and is in danger of causing the loss of both the building itself, and the vital resources housed within.

401 Richmond is just one critical example. In 2015, as part of the development of the Ontario Culture Strategy, the City of Toronto provided a submission to the Government of Ontario that requested the examination of a property assessments for designated heritage properties, as an effort to both protect these resources for the future, but also to encourage their maintenance for dynamic purposes including the arts, as opposed to just “highest and best use”.

It is critical that the City of Toronto continue its advocacy to the Provincial Government to address both heritage retention, and support for arts and cultural organizations throughout our communities.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM24.14

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-100527.pdf>)