CITY OF OTTAWA GOVERNANCE REVIEW TABLED NOVEMBER 12, 2026
RECOMMENDATION TO DISMANTLE THE BUILT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Here are some facts and arguments to use when you contact the Mayor, Councillors, or your networks:

- Recommendation to dismantle the Built Heritage Committee (BHC) in the name of "**streamlining**" and "**efficiencies**."
    - **PROBLEM:** No examples of evidence presented in the report.

- Recommendation states that there was "**duplication"** between the mandates of Planning and Housing Committee, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee and the Built Heritage Committee on heritage matters.
    - **WHAT DUPLICATION?** Of 175 reports reviewed by Built Heritage Committee, only 14 went to Planning & Housing Committee, and none to Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee.

- The *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) is an Act independent from, not subordinate to, the *Planning Act,* therefore OHA-related decisions should not be subsumed within a planning committee focused on zoning matters and broader policy discussions.

- Ottawa has the second-highest number of designated heritage properties in Ontario, behind only Toronto. As the nation's capital, the responsibility to preserve and protect these properties is significant.

BACKGROUND

- The Built Heritage Committee and its predecessors (Built Heritage Sub-Committee and Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee) has been responsible for providing sage and responsible expert advice to City Council on heritage matters since shortly after the enactment of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) in 1975. It is mandated by the OHA. If dismantled, the City will be the only larger-sized city to *not* have a such an advisory body, despite the large number of designated properties and heritage conservation districts.

- In 2012, the committee evolved into a **councillor/citizen blended** sub-committee reporting to Planning Committee, a committee structure that all evidence indicates was effective and actually worked.

- In 2022, the Built Heritage Committee became an official standing committee of council, retaining its councillor/citizen blended composition, but reporting directly to City Council. It was respected by the public, developers, heritage advocacy groups, city heritage planning staff, and city councillors.

- Citizen members are qualified heritage conservation experts — practitioners, architects, building owners who contribute their knowledge and insights to the decision-making process.

- In 2018, the Governance Review recognized the citizen members' contributions toward conserving and promoting heritage in the City of Ottawa and noted that they "have provided valuable expertise extending from their experience as experts in the field."