



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 12, 2025

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** March 8, 2026
From: Councillor Krista Loughton
Subject: Urgent Modernization and Continuity of the Canadian Register of Historic Places

LATE ITEM RATIONALE

The Canadian Register of Historic Places is scheduled for decommissioning in early spring 2026. This meeting represents the final opportunity for Council to approve and dispatch the letter before the April deadline.

BACKGROUND

In early spring 2026, Parks Canada is scheduled to decommission the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP), which is vital digital infrastructure that has served as the backbone of the nation's heritage sector since 2004. While a replacement platform is in development, Parks Canada has announced that this new system will exclusively house sites with federal heritage designations. This decision effectively orphans over 13,500 records of local, provincial, and territorial historic sites currently accessible through the registry, representing a significant retreat from two decades of collaborative heritage conservation.

The CRHP is more than a simple list; it is a comprehensive repository of Canada's collective identity, containing detailed construction data, architectural drawings, and "Statements of Significance" that provide the necessary context for preserving our built environment. The loss of this resource due to "technological obsolescence" is a direct result of minimal investment over the past 15 years. While data is being returned to originating jurisdictions, this decentralization creates a fragmented landscape where researchers, planners, and the public can no longer access a unified national framework for understanding and stewarding historic places.

The implications of this removal are particularly severe for provinces and territories that rely on the CRHP as their primary public-facing inventory. Even in jurisdictions like British Columbia, which maintains its own registry, the data remains incomplete because provincial systems often do not include federally designated sites within their borders. Without a central hub, the ability to perform comparative research and make informed conservation decisions is severely compromised. While private-sector "stop-gap" solutions have begun to emerge, they lack the necessary accountability regarding data integrity, copyright protection, and the formal process required for the de-registration

of lost structures.

Heritage BC and the BC Museums Association, in partnership with the National Trust for Canada, are seeking immediate leadership from the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change to find a modern, sustainable solution. They are urging the federal government to move beyond a "federal-only" replacement and instead lead the redevelopment of a comprehensive, GIS-enabled national registry. It is essential that Parks Canada works collaboratively with provincial and territorial partners to ensure that Canada's heritage sector continues to have a trusted, high-quality information source that protects our shared history for future generations.

"The CRHP has been an indispensable tool for communities across Canada. Losing it leaves a significant gap in our ability to do comparative research about heritage across the country and to understand and care for our historic places across the country."

— Kirstin Clausen, Executive Director, Heritage BC

"We see this as an opportunity to strengthen how heritage information is shared nationally. By working together, we can ensure that people can continue to have access to the knowledge they need to protect their historic places."


— Jules André-Brown, Executive Director, BC Museums Association

RECOMMENDATION

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THAT Council direct the mayor to write the Honourable Julie Dabrusin, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (CC: Honourable Anne Kang, B.C. Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport), requesting a collaborative, modern replacement for the Canadian Register of Historic Places to preserve its 13,500+ existing records;

AND THAT this motion be forwarded to today's daytime Council meeting for adoption.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Krista Loughton