

April 23, 2020

To:

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change;  
The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities;  
The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage;  
The Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages; and  
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance

Dear Ministers,

**Subject: COVID-19, and Heritage Places Sector Recommendations for Recovery**

The National Trust for Canada and its undersigned national, provincial and territorial partner organizations are reaching out to your respective ministries to applaud relief measures to date, and recommend recovery measures that will capitalize on shovel-ready projects, create new green jobs, spur private investment and contribute to community resiliency over the long term.

***We recommend that the Government earmark at least \$200 million in stimulus funding to unlock billions of dollars in capital construction and other investments at older/heritage buildings. This funding would target the renewal, retrofitting and adaptive use of revenue-generating space, the creation of affordable housing and more; and would help nonprofits and charities renew cultural infrastructure and social purpose real estate.***

Why? Because investments in existing older and heritage places are an ideal target for economic recovery and community infrastructure programs:

- Shovel-Ready Projects exist across Canada in **urban, rural, and Indigenous** heritage places;
- Projects at existing buildings create **21% more jobs** than new construction, with less “leakage” out of the Canadian economy for foreign goods;
- Funding will leverage **private sector investment** and other financial instruments;
- Adaptive use and retrofits of existing buildings **reduce GHG emissions and demolition waste**, and capitalize on materials, energy, and sunk carbon already invested;
- Investments in their infrastructure will provide increased stability for the **charitable, non-profit and tourism sectors**; and
- Healthy and vibrant main streets and neighborhoods strengthen **social cohesion** and drive **local economies**.

**What our recommendation will accomplish:**

The potential for stimulus investments targeting older/heritage buildings is vast: Many billions of dollars in capital repair, energy retrofits and adaptive re-use could be generated at some of the 437,000 pre-1960 commercial and industrial properties; 1,000,000 pre-1960 apartment units; 27,000 places of faith; as well as thousands of institutional buildings in private and public ownership. Stimulus investments can leverage at least 5 times more in private investment, create new green jobs; renew, adapt and retrofit existing infrastructure; produce new revenue-generating space; create new affordable housing units and more.

Similarly, investing in the renewal of cultural infrastructure and social purpose real estate owned or operated by charities and nonprofits – historic sites, museums, cultural hubs, places of faith, Indigenous heritage places, lighthouses, former residential schools, cultural landscapes etc.– will ensure much-needed capital work and/or improved visitor amenities to help them compete in the global tourism market, and will spur creative new uses.

This approach will reach beyond major cities and have immediate and measurable impacts on the economies of small town and rural Canada. Funding could flow without delay to projects large and small through existing mechanisms such as **Regional Economic Development Agencies**, the **Cultural Spaces Canada Program** and Parks Canada's **National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places**.

It can also be used to support participation in national celebrations like [Canada Historic Places Day](#) that generate awareness and encourage Canadians to explore special places virtually online, and visit historic places close to home when the doors re-open. In parallel, there is great potential to leverage corporate philanthropy and crowdfunding and generate public awareness using proven high-profile crowdfunding tools like [This Place Matters](#).

We will follow up with each of your ministries to request an opportunity to discuss our recommendations in more detail. We would be pleased to work with Government to establish criteria and delivery strategies for infrastructure investments that make better, wiser use of the buildings all around us.

Yours sincerely, on behalf the undersigned organizations listed on the following page,



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Encl: List of Signatory Organizations

**Signatory Organizations to April 23, 2020 Letter to Ministers:  
COVID-19, and the Heritage Places Sector's Recommendations for Recovery**

National Trust for Canada: Natalie Bull, Executive Director  
 Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals: Dima Cook, President  
 Canadian Urban Institute: Mary W. Rowe, President & CEO  
 Indigenous Heritage Circle: Karen Aird, President, Founding Director  
 Action Patrimoine: Renée Genest, Directrice générale  
 Architectural Conservancy of Ontario: Kae Elgie, President  
 Association Heritage New Brunswick: Kellie Blue-McQuade, Executive Director  
 Edmonton Heritage Council: David Ridley, Executive Director  
 Fédération Histoire Québec: Richard Bégin, President  
 Heritage BC: Paul Gravett, Executive Director  
 Heritage Calgary: Josh Traptow, Executive Director  
 Heritage NL: Jerry Dick, Executive Director  
 Héritage Montréal: Robert Turgeon, Executive Director  
 Heritage Saskatchewan: Ingrid Cazakoff, Chief Executive Officer  
 Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia: Andrew Murphy, President  
 Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador: Andrea MacDonald, Executive Director  
 Manitoba Historical Society: Tracey Turner, Chief Executive Officer  
 National Historic Sites Alliance: Andrew Waldron  
 Newfoundland and Labrador Historic Trust: Tyler Stapleton, President  
 Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society: Joe Flemming, President  
 Ontario Historical Society: Robert Leverty, Executive Director  
 Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation: Dr. David Keenlyside, Executive Director  
 Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network: Grant Myers, President  
 Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation: Shari Hildred, Manager  
 Yukon Historical and Museums Association: Lianne Maitland, Executive Director

