

August 31, 2026

RE: Item 7.1 | Heritage Places Strategy

Dear Mayor Knack and members of Urban Planning Committee:

BILD Edmonton Metro is a non-profit organization representing over 500 companies in the building and development industry. Our members are committed to shaping our region to ensure more people and businesses choose to live, invest, and thrive here.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Heritage Places Strategy and proposed Policy C450C. BILD Edmonton Metro appreciates the City's engagement with heritage partners, community organizations, Indigenous partners, and representatives from the development industry throughout this work. We also recognize the intent of the Strategy: to modernize Edmonton's approach to heritage by broadening the conversation beyond built form alone and better reflecting the natural, Indigenous, community, cultural, and built places that matter to Edmontonians.

BILD-EM supports the goal of recognizing and conserving heritage in a way that contributes to Edmonton's identity, climate resilience, local economic development, and complete communities. Heritage places can add character, support adaptive reuse, strengthen neighbourhood identity, and help attract people and investment. We agree that incentives, partnerships, and practical implementation tools will be essential if the Strategy is to achieve those outcomes.

In order to support continued investment in heritage places, the Strategy should be implemented in a balanced, practical and predictable way. Heritage policies should encourage rehabilitation, adaptive reuse and thoughtful redevelopment by providing property owners with clear expectations and sufficient flexibility to respond to site-specific conditions and project realities. By ensuring that requirements are proportionate, achievable and economically viable, the City can help create the conditions for ongoing private investment and increase opportunities to retain and revitalize heritage places over time.

A successful approach should focus on enabling good outcomes rather than adding process for its own sake. That means clear criteria, early conversations with applicants, timely decision-making, and tools that recognize the real costs of conservation. It also means ensuring that grants, incentives, and flexible approaches to code, design, and adaptive reuse are strong enough to make preservation a practical option. As implementation proceeds, BILD-EM encourages Administration to clearly address how heritage-related grant programs can help offset costs associated with building code upgrades, life-safety requirements, accessibility, and other technical work that is often

necessary when rehabilitating buildings that may be more than a century old. These costs can be complex and significant, and ensuring that available funding tools are designed with this reality in mind will be important for applicants and for the long-term success of the Strategy. Policy direction alone will not protect heritage places; implementation must make it feasible for owners and builders to do the right thing.

We encourage Administration to continue working with BILD-EM and industry partners as the associated Administrative Procedure, incentive programs, grant criteria, and implementation priorities are developed. This collaboration will be particularly important where heritage objectives intersect with housing delivery, infill, downtown revitalization, major redevelopment, building code compliance, and the reuse of existing buildings.

BILD-EM welcomes the City's efforts to update Edmonton's heritage framework and looks forward to supporting an approach that celebrates important places while keeping Edmonton moving, growing, and investing in its future.

Sincerely,



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VP, Policy & Advocacy
BILD Edmonton Metro

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